A Call to Remember

Local negotiations over the memory of Indian Residential Schools in Canada

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

This thesis discusses social remembering of difficult past in the context of Indian Residential Schools in Canada. Perceiving remembering as social practice of making the past meaningful for the present, the thesis focuses on the role of local memory practices in bringing a silenced history into focus of public attention and historical reconstruction.

Residential schools were originally established by the Canadian government and churches for assimilating indigenous children into Euro-Canadian settler society through separation from their cultural background. Although operated for more than a hundred years between the late 19th and 20th centuries, the schools remained a silenced topic in the history of the country until the 1990s. Exploring local practices of commemoration and education around the old Shingwauk Residential School in Northern Ontario, the thesis discusses how negotiation over the meaning of a troubling past takes place in the intersections of public, political discussion and local level social interactions.

Remembering as social and political practice is here understood not exclusively as a basis of shared identity grounded on common understanding of the past. Rather, the thesis focuses on challenging, negotiation and transformation as essential aspects of social memory. The thesis takes part in discussion on the relationship between past and present in debates over colonial history: whether residential schools are regarded as a single policy situated in the past, or whether they are recognized as part of the broader colonial history that still shapes the contemporary Canadian society.

The analysis in this thesis is based on three-month field research conducted in the summer of 2016 Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, on the site of the late Shingwauk School that nowadays hosts Algoma University. The research focused on the following memory practices that have developed around the school since the 1970s: a history-documenting and archiving project, a former students' association, and an archives centre, dedicated to preservation of and education about the history of the school. The research was based on qualitative methods of thematic interviews and participant as well as direct observation, and supported with archival sources.

Local negotiations over the memory of residential schools are discussed in relation to three different elements of the research context. The first part of the analysis focuses on the mutual emergence of public discussion on the history of residential schools and the local memory practices. The thesis argues that those local practices have contributed to uncovering the silence around the schools in public discussion and historical documentation. The second part looks at the relationship between memory and place: how the site of the Shingwauk School is today integrated in negotiation over the historical significance of residential schools. The old school is perceived as a site of transmitting the memory of past injustice, inseparable of the contemporary debates over addressing the legacy of that past on local as well as national level. Finally, contemporary educational practices of the archives centre and the former Shingwauk students are discussed as social spaces of negotiating the place of residential schools as part of the broader history of colonization for the public memory of Canadians of different backgrounds.

The thesis argues that local practices of commemoration and education work as a counterforce against silencing and forgetting by creating social space between public discussion on residential schools and everyday experiences of people who might otherwise find that history distant to themselves. Local actions for preserving the memory of the Shingwauk School are intertwined with broader concerns over awareness about and engagement with the history of residential schools especially among the non-indigenous public. The thesis maintains that local initiatives of remembrance that emphasize continuity between the past and the present can challenge the rhetoric that attempts to obscure the enduring legacy of colonialism in Canadian society by situating residential schools into a past that has already reached its closure.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
social memory, historical silences, settler colonialism, Canada, decolonization, politics of memory, indigenous peoples

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Tutkielma käsittelee vaikean menneisyyden sosiaalista muistamista alkuperäisväestön lasten asuntolakoulujen kontekstissa Kanadassa. Muistamista käsitellään tutkielmassa sosiaalisena toimintana, jonka kautta menneisyys tehdään merkitykselliseksi nykyisyydelle. Tutkielma keskittyy erityisesti paikallisen muistitoiminnan rooliin vaietun historian tuomisessa julkiseen keskusteluun ja osaksi laajempaa historian rekonstruoinnin prosessia.

Asuntolakoulujärjestelmää hallinnoivat Kanadan valtio ja eri kirkkokunnat, ja sen alkuperäinen tavoite oli alkuperäisväestön lasten sulauttaminen eurokanadalaiseen siirtolaisyhteiskuntaan erottamalla heidät kulttuurisesta taustastaan. Vaikka koulut olivat toiminnassa yli sadan vuoden ajan 1800-luvun lopulta 1900-luvun viimeisille vuosikymmenille, ne pysyivät 1990-luvulle asti historiallisesti vaiettuna aiheena. Tutkielma analysoi pohjoisontariolaisen Shingwauk Residential Schoolin ympärille muodostunutta kommemoraatioon ja historiatietoisuuden kasvattamiseen keskittyvää muistitoimintaa ja pyrkii siten osoittamaan, kuinka neuvottelu vaikean menneisyyden merkityksestä tapahtuu julkisen, poliittisen keskustelun ja paikallistason sosiaalisen toiminnan rajapinnoilla.

Muisti sosiaalisena ilmiönä voi tutkielmassa esitetyn käsityksen mukaan olla muutakin, kuin perusta sosiaaliselle identiteetille ja yhteisön kesken jaetulle käsitykselle yhteisestä menneisyydestä. Muistamista käsitellään sen sijaan sosiaalisena ja poliittisena toimintana, jonka olennaisina ulottuvuuksina nähdään myös neuvottelu menneisyyden merkityksistä sekä niiden haastaminen ja muuttaminen. Tutkielma osallistuu keskusteluun menneisyyden ja nykyisyyden suhteesta koloniaalisen historian kontekstissa: nähdäänkö asuntolakoulut yksittäisenä menneisyyteen sijoittuvana instituutiona, vai tunnistetaanko ne osana laajempaa koloniaalista historiaa, jonka vaikutukset ulottuvat myös tämän päivän kanadalaiseen yhteiskuntaan.

Tutkielman analyysi perustuu kesällä 2016 toteutettuun kolmen kuukauden kenttätyöjaksoon Sault Ste. Marien kaupungissa Ontariossa. Tutkimus toteutettiin pääasiassa entisen Shingwauk Residential Schoolin alueella, missä nykyään toimii paikallinen yliopisto Algoma University. Tutkimus keskittyi seuraaviin toimintoihin, jotka ovat kehittyneet vanhan asuntolakoulun muistamisen ympärille 1970-luvulta alkaen: historiallinen dokumentointi- ja arkistointiprojekti, entisten asuntolakouluoppilaiden yhdistys, sekä koulun historian säilyttämiseen ja siitä valistamiseen keskittyvä arkisto- ja tutkimuskeskus. Tutkimusmenetelminä käytettiin teemahaastatteluita ja sekä osallistuvaa että suoraa havainnointia. Lisäksi tutkimuksen tukena hyödynnettiin arkistolähteitä.

Paikallista neuvottelua asuntolakoulujen muistosta käsitellään tutkielmassa suhteessa kolmeen eri tutkimuskontekstin elementtiin. Analyysin ensimmäinen osa keskittyy paikallisen muistitoiminnan alkuvaiheisiin ja sen vuorovaikutukseen samoihin aikoihin heränneen, asuntolakouluja käsittelevän julkisen keskustelun kanssa. Tutkielma esittää, että paikallinen toiminta on edistänyt sekä asuntolakouluja ympäröineen julkisen hiljaisuuden purkamista että koulujen historian dokumentointia. Toinen osio käsittelee sosiaalisen muistin ja paikan suhdetta: kuinka vanha Shingwauk School muistin paikkana on mukana neuvottelussa asuntolakoulujen historiallisesta merkityksestä. Vanhaa koulua tarkastellaan paikkana, jonka kautta muistoa menneisyyden vääryydestä välitetään eteenpäin, sekä erottamattomana osana tuon menneisyyden perintöä koskevaa väittelyä niin paikallisella kuin kansallisella tasolla. Analyysin viimeisessä osassa käsitellään arkistokeskuksen historiakasvatuksellisia toimintoja sosiaalisina tiloina, joissa neuvotellaan asuntolakouluhistorian ja sen laajemman koloniaalisen kontekstin merkitystä eritaustaisten kanadalaisten jaetulle muistille.

Tutkielma esittää, että paikalliset kommemoraation ja historiakasvatuksen toiminnot toimivat vastavoimana vaientamista ja unohtamista vastaan. Luomalla sosiaalisia tiloja julkisen keskustelun ja ihmisten arkikokemusten rajapinnoille tällaiset paikallisprojektit tuovat historian lähemmäksi niille, joille se saattaa muuten näyttäytyä etäisenä ja merkityksettömänä. Tutkielmassa käsiteltävässä paikallisessa toiminnassa kohtaavat paikalliset ponnistelut Shinhwauk Residential Schoolin muiston säilyttämiseksi ja laajempi huoli muiden kuin alkuperäisväestöön kuuluvien kanadalaisten ymmärryksestä ja kiinnostuksesta asuntolakoulujen historiaa kohtaan. Tutkielman mukaan menneisyyden ja nykyisyyden välistä jatkuvuutta painottavat paikallisprojektit voivat haastaa retoriikan, jolla pyritään häivyttämään kolonisaation jatkuva perintö kanadalaisessa yhteiskunnassa sulkemalla asuntolakoulut jo taakse jääneeseen menneisyyteen.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
sosiaalinen muisti, historian hiljaisuudet, asuttajakolonialismi, Kanada, dekolonisaatio, muistin politiikka, alkuperäiskansat

Contents

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List of Acronyms

AFN - Assembly of First Nations

AHF - Aboriginal Healing Foundation

ADR - Alternative Dispute Resolution Process

CEP - Common Experience Payment

CSAA - Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association

IAP - Independent Assessment Process

IRSSA - Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement

IRS system - Indian Residential School System

NRSSS - National Residential School Survivors Society

NCTR - National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

OIRSSS - 1) Ontario Indian Residential School Survivors Society

2) Ontario Indian Residential School Support Services

RCAP - Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

SET - Shingwauk Education Trust

TRC - Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study and research questions

This thesis discusses remembering of a difficult and contested past in a society, focusing on construction and negotiation of social memory of Indian Residential Schools in Canada. Perceiving remembering as practice that takes place in social relations and interactions, I will discuss how the significance of a past that used for long to be silenced in official narratives of national history is being negotiated in a particular local context: the late Shingwauk Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie, Northern Ontario. My intention is to explore the practices of remembrance developed around the Shingwauk School as intersections of public debates on a contested past and remembering as informal everyday practice.

Indian Residential School (IRS) System operated in Canada from 1880s until the late decades of the 20th century, in collaboration between the federal government and different Christian denominations. The system was part of the government's assimilative policy towards the indigenous peoples of the country, originally aiming at replacing the students' traditional cultures and ways of life with those of Euro-Canadian settlers by separating the children from their families and communities (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015a, v, 3). As a colonial policy aiming at assimilation of indigenous children into settler society, the Canadian IRS system was not completely unique during its time of operation. It should rather be viewed as part of a wider trend of assimilation politics in settler colonial states, operated especially through removal of indigenous children from their families and communities. Other such examples include a similar boarding school policy employed in the United States and the Australian policy of adopting aboriginal and especially half-aboriginal children into white families.[1] Such policies have not been totally foreign to Northern European countries either. In Finland, for example, education of Sami children took place in school residences separate from their home communities during the decades following the Second World War (e.g. Nyyssönen 2014).

[1] For more, see e.g. Jacobs (2009): *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880–1940* and McDade (2008): *The Birth of the American Indian Manual Labor Boarding School: Social Control Through Culture Destruction, 1820–1850.*

It was not until the early 1990s when former residential school students started to bring their experiences into public. Within the past three decades, however, the schools have made it into a focus of intensive public discussion, starting from first public testimonies of individual former students and leading to a nation-wide reconciliation process. The Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) was implemented in 2007, involving financial compensation for former students by the government, an official apology on the part of the government in 2008, and the establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), which operated from 2008 to 2015. At the same time various community projects took place in indigenous communities across Canada, dedicated to commemoration of residential schools and children who went there, to supporting former students still alive, and to raising awareness about residential schools and their influences on indigenous communities.

The perspective of the indigenous peoples has until quite recently been absent from the dominant narratives of Canadian history. The discussion on residential schools as an unjust tool of forced cultural assimilation has, on its part, challenged some previous dominant assumptions on that history as one of peaceful relations (see e.g. Regan 2010). Adding the fact that many former students of the residential schools and their descendants are still struggling with the impacts of the schools, the public discussion on the topic has at times been highly emotionally loaded. One part of the mandate of the TRC was to raise public awareness about residential schools and to encourage acts for reconciliation in all areas of life (TRC 2015, 21, 32). The TRC defined the concept of reconciliation as a process restoration of relationship based on trust and mutual respect between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians that would continue in all aspects of the society after the Commission itself would finish its operation (TRC 2015, 7–8). What is at stake is not only recognition of the harm brought to the indigenous peoples but concrete action for renewing damaged relations and addressing the harms (*ibid.* 21; Regan 2010, 12). Even though more and more people *know* about residential schools, the work still appears to be ongoing in engaging especially the non-indigenous public in the process of reconciliation. The timing of my research was essential in this sense. I conducted it in the summer of 2016, a year after the TRC had finished its operation and half-a-year after it had released its final report and 94 Calls to Action[2]. The closure of the operations of the TRC has been

[2] TRC's *Calls to Action* include 94 practical suggestions for addressing the enduring impacts of residential schools and for advancing reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians in

followed by concerns over whether the public discussion on residential schools and nation-wide addressing of their impacts will be continued, or if it will be forgotten without official structures to keep up the conversation (see e.g. CBC News, June 2, 2016).

My research focuses on a community project developed around the former Shingwauk Indian Residential School. The school operated at the edge of the city of Sault Ste. Marie from 1875 until 1970, for the most part under the Anglican Church of Canada. Since 1971, the property has been home to Algoma University. In 1979, few faculty members of the University started the Shingwauk Project in order to document the history of the residential school. The Project started to contact former students of the school in order to gather material of their experience of the institution, which eventually led to the organization of the first Shingwauk Reunion for former students in 1981. The reunions started to be organized more regularly in the 1990s, and the most active of the former students formed the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA) in 1996. The amount of material collected grew during the years, and the Project was granted a space for an archives and visitors' centre at the University. The Shingwauk Residential School Centre today hosts the collections of the Shingwauk Project as well as other archival material from the years of the Project and the CSAA. The Centre is open to visitors, students and researchers, and organizes educational program such as exhibitions and guided tours on the site.

In this thesis I will focus on these three elements - the Shingwauk Project, the CSAA and the Centre – as one long-term memory project. I will discuss how the history and shared memory of residential schools have been and are being constructed in these local practices, from the formation of the community of former students to the contemporary commemorative and educational activities. Reflecting on public concerns over whether the official initiatives of commemoration and reconciliation will remain distant to especially non-indigenous Canadians, I argue that local initiatives such as this one can produce social spaces for remembering in the interface between public media and political discussion and people's everyday experience. Typical to contexts of dealing with past injustices of states, a tension persist here over whether the past is viewed as separate from the present and thereby to be left behind in order for the society to move forward, or

different areas of the society, from education and health to sports and business. For more, see: *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015c).

whether it is seen as unavoidably shaping present conditions and relations in that society (see e.g. Ahmed 2014, Campbell 2014). Apart from the wider public discussion, I will focus on how these tensions take shape in the local context: what kind of concerns are expressed and what kinds of actions taken in order to secure that the memory of the Shingwauk School will be recognized and maintained in the future. Observing how continuity between the past and the present is articulated in this context, I suggest that these local initiatives provide various means of challenging claims for "leaving the past behind".

The thesis is structured around the following three special elements of the research context through which I will discuss the main research question presented above:

1) Constructing the history of Shingwauk Residential School based on the perspective of former students, and forming a community of memory

2) The residential school site as a place of remembrance and a physical reminder of the residential school

3) Contemporary educational practices of the Centre and some of the Shingwauk Alumni as channels for transmitting and negotiating the memory and historical significance of residential schools

My analysis is grounded on the idea of remembering as social practice; that shared understandings of the past are formed and negotiated as part of social interactions and relations (see e.g. Lambek 1996; Campbell 2014). With formation of a "community of memory", a concept borrowed from Irwin-Zarecka (1994), I refer to such social negotiation over a shared meaning of the past rather than a community based on simply having experienced the same past event. Focusing on how the tensions between remembering and forgetting that characterize the public discussion around residential schools are manifested in the local context, I will approach these themes in relation to the elements listed above. I will start my analysis (*chapter 4*) from the interplay of local practices of remembrance and the uncovering of the public silence around residential schools, as reflected in the early actions of the Shingwauk Project and the Alumni. In addition to how the basis for shared memory of the school has been formed, I will discuss how this memory is constantly reconstructed in contemporary social practices. In chapter 5, I will move on to the school site as a place of remembrance, discussing how claims concerning the past are articulated in relation to place. Reflecting on broader discussion about places of past atrocities, I will explore how the school site plays an important part

in defining the meaning of the past of this certain residential school for the present. In chapter 6, which deals with the educational practices, I will focus especially on transformative and negotiating aspects of social remembering. I will discuss those practices as spaces of engaging wider public in remembrance of residential schools and negotiating why it should matter to "all Canadians".

I follow a line of argument in memory studies that regards remembering as concerning not only past but also to a great extent present and future: how we make sense of the past is about defining our position in the present, in relation to other people (see e.g. Campbell 2014, Climo & Cattell 2002, Lambek 1996). If residential schools are to be situated in the broader context of relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians and the state, historically shaped by colonization, negotiating the significance of residential schools is to be viewed as part of working on these relations in the present (see e.g. Campbell 2014, 105). I argue that this local project contributes to reframing this history of relations through working on the history and memory of residential schools. I view the local context as part of a larger project of decolonizing those histories and reclaiming the indigenous perspective on them (e.g. Regan 2010, Dion 2004).

Within the past three decades, a rather established frame has evolved for talking and writing about residential schools. Recognition of residential schools as an act of cultural genocide and the impacts of the schools on indigenous families and communities as intergenerational could be named as some of the key elements of this framing (see Kenny 1999, 430). During the period from the early 1990s until today, the residential schools have become situated as part of a more wide-scale project of colonization and assimilation. Today, former residential school students are generally referred to as *residential school survivors.* The term refers to the fact that there were many students that never made it back home but died in the schools due to diseases, accidents, poor health care or during their attempts to run away (for more, see e.g. TRC 2015b, xii–xiii). As the schools are recognized as having an intergenerational impact, the descendants of former students are also at times referred to as second- or third-generation survivors. From now on, I will use the term "survivor" for a former student of a residential school as the term has already been deeply established within literature and public discussion on residential schools.

1.2 Theoretical framework the structure of the thesis

Remembering as social practice

Here I will provide a brief introduction on theories of social memory that form the theoretical background of the thesis. Rather than a cognitive capacity to recollect things, I will discuss memory in this context as the means by which people make their past meaningful for the present. Social memory, in turn, refers to the idea of remembering as social practice taking place in interaction with other people instead of a purely individual capacity. Lot of contemporary literature on memory within social sciences is based on the classic work of a French sociologist and philosopher Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (1992 [1925]). Halbwachs argues that what and how we remember is shaped by our membership in different social groups, such as family or society. How individuals remember, then, is dependent on symbols and narratives that are publicly available and shared collectively with other members of the group (*ibid*. 38, 43; Olick 1999, 335). Shared memory produced and transmitted within these groups is what binds them together and ensures continuity (Climo & Cattell 2002, 27). Memories do not need to draw from first-hand experiences; they can be reproduced and transmitted intergenerationally by different means of communication, such as stories, songs and ceremonies, physical objects and places, embodied habits and social practices (*ibid*. 17; Connerton 2011, 104; Nora 1989, 3).

The term *collective memory* has been debated for questions such as how to define the collective that remembers, and how are the positions of an individual and the collective defined in the act of remembrance. Olick (1999, 339) distinguishes between two ways of defining collective memory: first, as a collective thought that is more than the sum of the memories of the individuals forming the collective, or, second, as being formed of distinctive memories of the individuals. As the latter perspective prioritizes individual thought over collective, Olick prefers to term it as "collected memory" instead of "collective". At the end Olick ends up suggesting the term "social memory" instead, as it maintains the idea of memory as social practice but does not require definition of a bounded group as a collective actor that remembers (*ibid*. 346). Not intending to take part in the debate of collective versus individual origin of memory, I follow Olick's suggestion and prefer to use the term social memory in this thesis. Avoiding the juxtaposition between collective structures or narratives and individuals who remember also gives more

focus on interactional dimensions of remembrance. I follow here authors such as Irwin-Zarecka (1994, 54) and Lambek (1996, 239) who view memory as a being continuously constructed and negotiated in social interaction rather than a static structure existing *per se*.

Another related question is how memory as a practice of making sense of the past differs from history. History has often been defined as professional documentation of the past in order to produce official narratives, whereas memory has been viewed as something more subjective, personal and thereby subject to change and manipulation (Olick & Robbins 1998, 110). Connerton (1989, 14) separates between historical reconstruction and social memory, regarding the former as production of "formal, written histories" and the latter as informal narratives of a group. Memory has often been related more to the meaning of past in lived experience of people in the present, in opposition to history as more distant past detached from the present everyday experience (e.g. Nora 1989, 3). This kind of dichotomy has, however, been criticized as too simplifying. Both extreme ideas of the factual authority of history as neutral documentation and memory as directly experience-based have been questioned. Lambek (1996, 243), for example, argues that both history and memory are "narrativized constructions", perceiving memory as "acts of narrative" taking place in interplay of private experiences and public narratives that mutually shape each other.

Whether talking about memory, history or both, another debate concerning studying the past is about to what extent the past can be accessed "as it happened" and to what extent it is constructed from present perspective. *Presentism* refers to a perspective on history according to which the present is the only moment of time that we can truly access, and that past cannot be understood in any other way than from present perspective. This kind of view has drawn criticism for justification of judgment of the past and manipulation of accounts of it from the perspective and for the purposes of the present (Hartog & Brown 2015, 110; Olick & Robbins 1998, 128). However, Olick and Robbins note that if approaching the question from constructivist perspective, we cannot access the past from any other way than through reconstruction from our present perspective. According to them, seeing the past from present perspective does not need to refer exclusively to "intentional manipulation" if the nature of memory is seen as "essentially interpretive" (*ibid*. 128). Keightley and Pickering (2012, 3, 64) develop this argument further by stating that imagination should be recognized as a vital part of this reconstructive process,

enabling formation of understandings of the meanings of the past as well as setting expectations for the future.

Political aspects

Remembering is thereby not only about how we see the past, but also about how we make sense of our present and future (e.g. Climo & Cattell 2002, 4). The idea of remembering as practice of giving meanings to past for the present involves a moral dimension; defining significance of past events for the present involves setting moral claims on both temporal dimensions (Lambek 1996, 248). Through forming connections between past and present events and conditions, memory may function both for justifying and for challenging present circumstances. Connerton (2011, 1–2) writes about *narratives of legitimation* that are employed to legitimate the current order of things within the society. Memory in social sense is also a channel of dealing with adversary pasts of suffering and violence. Connerton terms shared narratives about histories of suffering as *narratives of mourning* (*ibid*. 12–13).

Social memory is shaped by social, political, economic circumstances and power relations (Climo & Cattell 2002, 4). This takes the discussion to what is called politics of memory: whose memories have authority in official narratives such as national histories, and whose voices are being heard within the public sphere of a society. In terms of national histories, dominant narratives of the past are reproduced through different channels such as national education and museum institutions, monuments and commemorative ceremonies (see e.g. Connerton 1989, Young 1993). Forming narratives of past is about inclusion and exclusion; equally important as what is included in them is what is being left out (Climo & Cattell 2002, 28). Trouillot (1995) argues that silences are an important part of formation of history, and that they occur in different phases of history production. What ends up a historical source or a meaningful historical event is rarely a coincidence, but is related to power relations of the given moment *(ibid.* 47–48). Going beyond what ends up in history books, Connerton (2011, 73) writes about *narrative silences* in reference to things in the history of a society that might be known but are not talked about. Formation – as well as uncovering – of silences is thus intertwined in everyday practices and not only in professional history production (see also Trouillot 1995, 19). This discussion of history, memory and power is especially important in the context of histories of colonialism. Official histories of colonization tend to be narrated from the perspective of

the colonizers, but are today being challenged more and more by narratives of indigenous peoples and other previously excluded groups (Kenny 1999, 430; Hamilton 2003, 138; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski 2004, 23).

Social memory is thus not exclusively something that binds social groups together, but can be subject to challenge and contestation (Climo & Cattell 2002, 30). In some instances, the power of memory has been associated especially with alternative or excluded narratives of the past, viewed as a way of challenging dominant narratives of "official" histories (e.g. Foucault 2003). Johannes Fabian (2007, 94) makes a distinction between collective memory as closed and homogenous and public memory as open to diverging perspectives and change. To make it more specific, he further separates popular memory from official public memory, viewing the former as dispersed in opposition to uniform, not controlled or "canonized" by public institutions (*ibid*. 104). However, as Fabian refers especially to a context in which a state-promoted, "official" public memory clearly contrasts with popular one, I would rather keep to a less sharp distinction in this thesis. One such definition is provided by a cultural theorist Roger Simon (2005, 81) who views the "sphere of public memory as a transactional space" of encounter and negotiation of different perspectives rather than of "consolidation of national memory".

Connerton (1989, 3) suggests that whether the members of a society share the same memory of its past determines to what extent they can share understanding and experience of the present. A feminist philosophy scholar Sue Campbell (2014), who writes especially about the relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, offers a complementary perspective. Campbell (*ibid*. 6) views remembering as a way of addressing social relations, and social memory not only as a basis of group identification but also as a forum of negotiation between differing perspectives. Simon (2005, 17) equally views challenging and contestation of memories as essential practice to a democratic society. In other words, memory's aspects of sharing and contestation do not need to be mutually exclusive. Focusing on pedagogical aspects of remembrance, Simon views it as social practice closely connected with learning, especially in contexts of being exposed to other's memory that may conflict with our own previous understandings. He pays attention to transformative function of remembering; remembering of and learning about past injustices may be turned into action for change in the present (*ibid.* 9, 89). Next I will explain in more detail how such perspectives on memory can be fruitful for discussing residential schools and their meaning for the present.

Why residential schools and social memory: postcolonial perspectives

How the public discussion on the history and legacy of residential schools has developed from the early 1990s until now is an example of how a previously silenced past is gradually being integrated into official history narratives and public memory[3]. The IRS System was in existence for nearly 100 years and was experienced first-hand by an approximate of 150 000 students (Canada 2018), but there has been hardly any "official" documented history available to public before survivors started to come out with their experiences. Thereby residential schools qualified for a long time as what Trouillot (1995) terms silences in history. The schools have only become integrated in the official history narratives while the survivors have struggled to have their experiences recognized. This process has shaped how the schools have become reframed, in public discussion as well as by the survivors themselves. As survivors have shared their experiences with each other and with wider public, residential school experience has become understood as collective and system-driven instead of individual struggles of individual students (Assembly of First Nations 1994, 130; Kenny 1999, 430).

Such understanding entails viewing the schools as an element of a broader history of colonialism that keeps shaping the contemporary relations between the indigenous people and the settlers. Memory here is essentially linked to power relations in the society. It does matter whether the residential schools are understood as a failed but initially benevolent system or as part of intentional policies of colonization (e.g. Henderson & Wakeham 2013, 12). For example, whether or not some contemporary challenges of indigenous communities are set in relation to such broader history shapes how those challenges are responded to, on part of the government as well as the non-indigenous public (TRC 2015a, 184–185). Moreover, differing understandings of the legacy of colonization shape public and political responses to indigenous claims for redress and decolonization in different areas of the society (Regan 2010, 68; Simon 2013, 139–40).

In addition to being very personal and sensitive to people who have experienced the schools themselves, the discussion about the legacy of residential schools is about moral

[3] The final report of the TRC states that "--- true reconciliation can take place only through a reshaping of a shared, national, collective memory: our understanding of who we are and what has come before." The report views such public memory as changing and dynamic, shaped in all areas of social life from education to arts to everyday social interactions (TRC 2015a, 268). This definition reflects Simon's (2005, 81) ideas of public memory as not something passed down by official structures, but forming in social interactions in different areas of the society.

claims and questions of responsibility (Regan 2010, 32; Simon 2013, 135). In her book *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (2010), Paulette Regan, the Director of Research for the TRC, argues that residential schools should be addressed as part of a broader decolonization process. According to Regan, such process entails settler Canadians to recognize and come to terms with the legacy of colonial violence in the history and structures of the society. This may be challenging as it asks people to resituate themselves in that history: "We may resist hearing such stories [of residential school survivors], partly because they challenge our own identity as a nation of benevolent peace-makers" (*ibid.* 50). Setting residential schools into wider context of the history of colonization brings about questions of identity and belonging that may disturb the narratives that, in Connerton's (2011, 2) words, legitimate the order of the contemporary Canadian society (Regan 2010, 68). Campbell (2014, 148) argues that it is clear that "the history and legacy of Residential Schooling needs to be alive to the memory of non-Aboriginal Canadians to support any prospect of the renewal of relationships." Addressing the history of residential schools is thereby also about different subjects seeing a connection with that history and their own present circumstances. Relating to broad questions of responsibility and identity, this kind of discussion may get sensitive and emotionally loaded (e.g. Regan 2010, 48). However, as noted earlier, remembering as social practice does not need to be solely about sharing a common, homogenous vision of the past (Campbell 2014, 6). Campbell sees the strength of shared memory in its aspect of negotiation; according to her, sharing memory is crucial to "intercultural reparative initiatives in settler societies" (*ibid*. 105; Simon 2005, 89). Remembering may, instead of only "looking back", have a transforming function in the present through creating mutual understanding between contested memories (Simon 2005, 101; Campbell 2014, 108).

Many colonial policies, such as residential schools, involved an element of erasure of social memory of the colonized and replacing it with a new one (Campbell 2014, 101; Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 72). In residential schools indigenous children were supposed to forget their own cultural background and adapt to the ways of the settler society (Campbell 2014, 101). This is why negotiating the memory of residential schools involves an aspect of reclaiming; it can be viewed in the light of indigenous peoples taking back the control of their history that has previously been narrated from the perspective of the colonizer (Regan 2010, 148; see also Tuhiwai-Smith 2012, 67). Reclaiming takes place

in different areas, from gaining authority as historical subjects to revitalization of culture, languages and traditions that assimilation policies such as residential schools were designed to erase. Restoration of indigenous traditions has been part of many community project addressing the impacts of residential schools, as well as of the official ceremonies of the TRC (Castellano 2006, 130; TRC 2015a, 30; Regan 2010, 148). Campbell (2014, 112) views that the public discussion developing around residential school experiences and testimonies works for "reclaiming the intergenerational memory the school sought to suppress". The survivors of the Shingwauk School I interviewed found it very important to "keep the memory [of the school] alive", in order to pass to younger generations the memory of both their experience in the school and of the work they have done to have the history of the place acknowledged. Also how the history of the Shingwauk School is being dealt with is, in addition to history and remembrance, related to questions such as control of the land and the role of indigenous content in contemporary education.

Finally, my thesis follows a general trend in the discussion on residential schools that argues against closure of residential schools into a past separated from the present (see e.g. Mackey 2013, 48; Simon 2013, 136; McKegney 2007, 6). The influences of the schools are still being lived and experienced, and not all the elements of colonial structures and ideologies that were behind the school system have disappeared. I recognize the need to be very careful when applying time-related concepts on residential schools; there is always a risk of reproducing the rhetoric of closure by using notions such as "a past event" or a "history of residential schools". I want to underline here that, while referring to the schools as a past event or institution, the only thing I locate into past is the actual operation of residential schools that has ceased more than two decades ago. In other ways, I recognize that residential schools and how they are being talked about is to a great extent a matter of the present.

In order to give some historical background for my research and analysis, the next chapter introduces the history of residential schools, setting the system into wider context of colonial assimilation policies towards indigenous peoples in Canada. At the end of the chapter, I will also shed some light on the public discussion on residential schools and their legacy that has emerged since the early 1990s, including the policies of redress of the Government of Canada. In chapter 3 I will describe and discuss my research methods, data and some ethical questions, before moving on to the actual analysis in chapter 4.

2 Indian Residential Schools in Canada

2.1 Residential schools as a policy of cultural assimilation

The IRS system was part of a more wide-scale change in Canada's policies towards indigenous peoples from alliances to assimilation that had already started under the imperial administration in the early 1800s. After the war of 1812–1814 against the United States there was no more need for military alliances between indigenous nations and the colonists, and fur trade was in decline. In the new circumstances of peace and increasing permanent settlements, indigenous peoples were no longer seen as valuable partners for the colonial administration but rather as obstacles to its economic purposes (Miller 2000, 103–104). Throughout the 1800s, various legislative means were employed for the purpose of having indigenous peoples assimilated in the emerging settler society and giving up their special rights to the land as its original inhabitants.[4] The final legal foundations for such policies were set in the Indian Act of 1876 that defined the constitutional status of the Indian First Nations and increased the control of the federal government on reservations. The Act also granted the Department of Indian Affairs the power to abolish any indigenous cultural, political or economic practice on the grounds of contradicting with the civilizational goals or Christian ideals of the state (Milloy 1999, 9, 21).

Such assimilative policies were based on assumptions of racial superiority of Euro-Canadians compared to indigenous peoples (Furniss 2000, 106). Scientific racism dominated western social sciences at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and was also reflected in state policies (Miller 1996, 153). Administrators and missionaries evaluated indigenous cultures according to their own, Euro-Canadian standards, and cultural differences became interpreted as inferiority. However, especially representatives of churches appeared to hold the assumption that via assimilation indigenous peoples could reach the same "level of civilization" as the whites (*ibid.* 185, 187).

[4] The Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 aimed at encouraging indigenous people to give up their collective rights to reserve lands and adopting private property as form of landownership. The British North America Act, implemented in 1867, gave the new federal government the power to "legislate for Indians and their property", practically meaning guardianship over the indigenous people. The Indian Act of 1876 replaced traditional indigenous forms of government with elected band councils as well as defined criteria for band membership and thereby a person's entitlement to reserve lands (Miller 2000, 140; Milloy 1999, 20).

The intention of the new policies was to break down the traditional social organizations of the indigenous people and to assimilate them into Euro-Canadian settler society (Milloy 1999, 6–7). However, they can also be traced to motives other than mere racist assumptions about indigenous peoples. De Leeuw (2009) examines rhetoric of the administrative reports from the 1800s, and argues that viewing indigenous people in general as "childlike subjects in need of management" was a crucial part of the colonial project of appropriating indigenous land. Acquiring land for the government and settlers via treaties and financial compensation was regarded as expensive, which led to a need for a moral justification of the replacement of lands from the indigenous people (*ibid*. 127). Regarded by missionaries and governmental officials as "incapable of looking after themselves", indigenous people were represented as equally incapable to manage land (Miller 1996, 186). The policies aiming at assimilation and controlling indigenous people's access to land were thereby justified with the government's moral responsibility to "help" them to reach the colonizers' standards of civilization. The latter was defined according to such elements as adopting agriculture, permanent settlement and the European notion of private property (de Leeuw 2009, 128).

Suggestions of employing boarding schools for systematic assimilation of indigenous children into the settler society had been introduced in different phases of the 19th century. The school issue was brought up for example in Bagot Commission Report in 1845, and in a report by a journalist and politician Nicolas Flood Davin in 1879, based on his observation of the boarding school system for indigenous children in the United States. In Davin's report the influence of family and community on indigenous children was represented as the greatest obstacle for their "civilization", and removal of them into a new environment dominated by Euro-Canadian influence was suggested as the solution for this problem (de Leeuw 2009, 129). Other factors that these reports viewed as effective for assimilation through institutional education were religious instruction and training for manual labour. These were regarded as key means of fostering the adaptation of the students to Euro-Canadian ways of life, and of their integration into the settler society after school (Miller 1999, 83; Milloy 1999, 16).

The first boarding schools for indigenous children had been established already as early as 1620s and 30s at Franciscan and Jesuit missions. Before the government took over the administration of the education of indigenous children in the late 1800s, several Christian denominations had already established residential institutions of their own (Miller 1996,

139; TRC 2015a, 50–51). Schooling became mandatory to indigenous children of 7–15 years of age via amendments to the Indian Act in 1919–1920. Practically this meant that parents could be punished for not sending their child to school (Miller 1996, 169–170). Besides ideological aspects, the choice to arrange indigenous education in this way had practical reasons such as the remote location of many indigenous communities. The schools were mainly operated by churches, but the system as a whole was coordinated and funded by the federal government. Residential schools were never the only possible option for indigenous education, and day schools were operating in reservations at the same time. However, during the period between 1920s and 1960s the residential schools were regarded by the government as the primary model of schooling indigenous children (Miller 1996, 7, 95; TRC 2015a, 3).

A vast range of examples exist of instances in which especially indigenous children have been positioned as the main targets of colonial assimilation policies. According to de Leeuw (2009, 124), this can be explained by the colonial administrators' view of the indigenous children as embodiments of indigenousness the colonial project sought to suppress and thereby as "threats to settler colonial imagination". She continues that the strategy of assimilation through children was based on the ideas of the time that it was possible to have children "transformed" into a new state if separated from their original environment. Residential schools, for example, were aimed at "re-production of indigenous people" through re-socialization of their children in institutional settings (*ibid*. 130). Jacobs (2005) compares forced adoption of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children in Australia and Indian boarding schools in the United States, paying attention to the intimacy in which removal of indigenous children by state authorities intervened in indigenous people's family and community relations. According to Jacobs (2005, 435, 462), the forced child removal marked "invasions into the most intimate spaces and relationships of indigenous peoples' lives", being justified by racist imagery of indigenous people as incapable of parenting. Tuhiwai-Smith (2012, 72) points residential schools and the adoptions in Australia as forms of colonial discipline aimed at eliminating indigenous knowledges and ways of living by destroying collective identities and memories that were regarded as obstacles for the colonial order.

It needs to be remembered that the different parties involved in establishment and operation of the IRS system had differing ideas of its goals. Some requests for organizing schooling for indigenous children came also from indigenous communities themselves

(Miller 1996, 77; Milloy 1999, 27). This was, for example, the case with the Shingwauk Residential School. The concern of the leaders of indigenous communities who requested for schools was that of survival of their people in the changing conditions. Schooling was not seen as a means for assimilation but for gaining understanding of the operations of the settler society, and for maintaining self-determination and self-sufficiency (Chute 1998, 45; Miller 1996, 77). There were also differences between the government and the churches, although to both of them residential schooling appeared as a tool for "civilization" and assimilation of indigenous children into settler society. For the government, these objectives were connected with the expected economic gains of absorbing the indigenous people in the mainstream society and having them give up special claims on land and resources. For the churches, on the other hand, the "civilizing mission" was motivated by their missionary objectives of conversion but also by humanitarian purposes. Many missionaries wanted to help indigenous communities to survive in the changing society, although their actions reflected patronizing attitudes towards those communities (Auger 2005, 7; Miller 1996, 125).

2.2 Schools in operation

As the children were often brought into residential schools from far-away reserves, they would in most cases spend the whole year in the institutions (Miller 1996, 422; TRC 2015b, 101). In some cases schools were located within shorter distance from the communities, but the pupils were still determined to live in the school instead of their homes. Sometimes children were moved from one school to another and had to endure adaptation to new circumstances several times (*ibid.* 99, 101). It was a common practice to separate siblings from each other as the social and physical structure of the schools was divided according to the pupils' age and gender. Communication with siblings or cousins of different age and gender was restricted: for example, siblings could attend the same school for 10 years and yet become distant to each other, being only allowed to see each other by glance at times in common events of the school (Haig-Brown 2006, 53). Especially younger students often suffered from loneliness and homesickness in the strange, new environment in which at the beginning many of them had no means to communicate due to language barrier. In many cases children did not know any English or French upon their arrival and were often instantly forbidden to speak their own language (Haig-Brown 2006, 53, 56; Miller 1996, 173, 422).

What has also come up of survivor accounts on residential schools – including those given by some of my interviewees – is the lack of affection that made life in the schools hard to bear for children and has had a significant influence in many survivors' lives after school. It has been described in many survivor accounts that the institutional conditions combined with lack of expressions of affection from the staff and fear of punishment made the pupils learn to hide their emotions in order to conform to the circumstances (Haig-Brown 2006, 95; Miller 1996, 339). This is not to claim, however, that there would not have been emphatic staff members devoted to their work and to well-being of the children in the schools. Many of them also engaged in improving the circumstances of the schools from within (Miller 1996, 210, 309). Especially some indigenous staff members have been recalled by former students for being able to provide the children important support in the new circumstances far from home (Haig-Brown 2006, 80; TRC 2015a, 128).

Days in the schools followed a strict schedule defined by studying and working hours, meals and church services. This was often new to pupils who were not necessarily used to living according to a clock (Milloy 1999, 36). The daily rhythm of the schools was usually based on so-called half-a-day system. Practically this meant that students, except the youngest ones, would spend first part of the day in the class and the later part working in for example the school's farm, kitchen, or laundry. The system was developed as a response to scarce funding and growing pressure of the schools to be self-sufficient (Miller 1996, 157). Another part of using students as work force was vocational training that was argued to support them to adapt into the modernizing society and to be able to make their living after graduation. However, most of the work done by the students in the schools was simple manual or agricultural labour (*ibid*. 164, 181). The half-a-day-system had a significant impact on students' academic progress. By the time of graduation many of them were several grades behind other students of their age, which in turn hindered their possibilities for getting a job or accessing further education. The level of academic instruction of the schools was also often poor compared to general standards. As the schools were usually run by churches, spiritual devotion was at times considered more important than professional qualifications in the recruitment of teachers (Miller 1996, 166, 174). Working in remote schools with low salaries was not always attractive to young teachers, which resulted in the lack of qualified applicants (*ibid.* 176).

The curricula of the schools were for many decades based on Euro-Canadian knowledge and worldview. Including subjects such as English, arithmetic, geography and religion,

the content of instruction was distant from everyday lives the students were accustomed to in their communities (Miller 1996, 155, 178). Especially during the early decades, the settler way of life and Euro-Canadian knowledge tended to be represented as superior to indigenous ones. The latter was viewed as backward and incompatible with modernization of the society, and in religious context often as immoral and contradictory to Christian ideals. History was equally taught from the white, British-Canadian perspective that represented non-whites or non-Europeans as "enemies of progress". Disregard of indigenous languages and cultures had serious effects on students' identity (Haig-Brown 2006, 57–58; Miller 1996, 178–9, 205). According to Miller (1996, 193), the "hidden curriculum" of segregation extended outside of classrooms into the division of space in the school properties that reflected the separation not only among students according to age and gender but also between students and staff. Religion was, especially during the early decades of the system, viewed by the administrators as potentially the most important factor in re-acculturation of the students (Milloy 1999, 36). As the schools were usually ran by churches, religion was strongly present in their daily life. In addition to the religious content included in teaching, students were to attend religious services several times a week and prayers were often held daily in the morning and in the evening (TRC 2015b, 86–87).

Rules in the schools usually reflected the hierarchies and the purpose of assimilation: The children were not only forbidden to speak their own language but also usually to practice any traditional customs of their cultures (Miller 1996, 204). The process of re-socialization involved some very detailed practices such as taking clothes and personal belongings away from the students upon their arrival, hair-cutting and often also re-naming with an English or a French name. A common practice was to photograph students upon their arrival at the school in their original clothes and appearance, and then again later after hair-cut in European-style clothes. These pictures were used as demonstration of the supposed civilizing influence of the schools (*ibid.* 194, 199). Both the long stays in the schools far from their families and the negative representation of indigenous cultures embedded in the instruction worked for creating distance between students and their home communities. In the worst cases the negative representations learnt in the school about their culture could lead to students learning to disapprove their own cultural background, and to conflicts between children and parents (Furniss 2000, 111; Haig-Brown 2006, 95; Miller 1999, 204–205).

In addition to racism embedded in the structures of the institution, many of the students had hard time trying to cope with issues unfortunately typical to any such boarding institution. Discipline was harsh and loneliness and bullying among the students was common. Residential schools have since become especially infamous for physical, mental and sexual abuse that took place in the schools, by both staff and other students. Students could face a violent punishment for disobeying the rules and or running away, or simply for expressing their culture in any way (see e.g. Haig-Brown 2006, 122; Miller 1996, 324). The scarce funding of the schools often resulted in poor living conditions. Food provided to the students was mainly produced in the school and was not always very nutritious, and the old buildings often lacked proper facilities for storing the food especially at the early times of the school system (Miller 1996, 307; TRC 2015a, 87). Children slept in dormitories where diseases spread fast and healthcare that was available was usually modest. Deaths in the schools were not uncommon, caused either by diseases or accidents in the work (Milloy 1999, 77).

What brought some change to the structured everyday life of the schools was free time activities occasionally organized for the students. These included for example sports and different clubs such as Scouts or Guides and Cadets. Miller (1996) notes that the latter were also employed in supporting the assimilative objectives of the schools by bringing in ideals of the citizenship of the British Empire (*ibid*. 276–277). In any case these less formal activities outside the classrooms and working spaces were usually very much welcomed by the students, and many have counted them into their positive memories of the school (TRC 2015a, 111). During the later decades of the school system the organization and life of the schools became less formal and hierarchical, involving also abandoning the objective of complete assimilation and increasing respect towards the students' cultural background. The language policies also changed in favour of indigenous languages during the late decades of the system (Miller 1996, 209–210).

Gradual integration of residential school students into public schools started in 1950s and continued for the next two decades. The decision of the government to gradually do away with residential schools was influenced by both the costliness and the critique having been directed to it by indigenous leaders across the country since the 1940s (Furniss 2000, 112; Milloy 1999, 193). By the transfer of the operation of the schools from churches to the Department of Indian Affairs in 1969, the Department had already made a decision of phasing out the system completely. Towards the end of the system in the 1960s and 70s

some of the schools also became operated by indigenous communities themselves. The last one of them closed in 1996 (Miller 1996, 402–3; Milloy 1999, 206, TRC 2015, 360).

Shingwauk Residential School, 1874–1970

The Shingwauk Residential School – called Shingwauk Home in its early years– in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, was originally established as a joint initiative by a local Ojibway chief Augustin Shingwauk and an Anglican priest Edward F. Wilson, who was working with the Ojibway people of the local Garden River First Nation community in 1870s–90s. Chief Shingwauk had been expressing wishes for a school for the children of the community already for some time, and the two men organized a fundraising tour for the school around Ontario in the 1871. On part of Chief Shingwauk, the roots for the idea about the school were in a vision that his father, Chief Shingwaukonse, had had decades ago. It is being told that in his vision Chief Shingwaukonse saw a big "teaching wigwam" where First Nations people and settlers could share their knowledges and teach each other. Already in 1832 Shingwaukonse had travelled to York in order to request a missionary and teachers for his people, which had led to establishment of the first Anglican mission in Garden River, and of a day school in the reservation in 1833 (Miller 1996, 5–6; Shingwauk Project 1992, 22).

Why in this case a school was requested by the indigenous leaders themselves had to do with socioeconomic conditions of the time. Growing presence of settler population and declining of previous means of subsistence caused worries about how indigenous communities would manage the changes while still maintaining their self-determination (Auger 2005, 4). The idea of Chief Shingwauk concerning the future of his people was sharing of resources with the colonists via treaties and "a synthesis of traditional Ojibway and European knowledges through Teaching Wigwams". Therefore his ideas behind having a school were to secure indigenous children's survival in the changing society while also acquiring skills that would support the indigenous people to maintain self-determination and control on their own issues and lands (Shingwauk Project 1992, 22). Wilson's early motives, on the other hand, were more related to "civilizing" and missionary purposes. The first Shingwauk Home was established already before residential schooling became an official policy of the government; however, eventually the school came to serve the assimilative objectives of the government and the church. Wilson, who became the first principal of the school, is said to have shifted his ideology

towards supporting indigenous self-determination during his years at Shingwauk, but was eventually forced to resign due to his conflicting views in 1892 (Shingwauk Project 1992, 22; Miller 1996, 10).

The first Shingwauk Home was opened in Garden River in 1873. The school, however, had been operating only for six days when it was destroyed by a fire. The cause of the fire still remains a mystery. Another school was built, but this time away from the reserve, on a piece of land closer to the town of Sault Ste. Marie (Miller 1996, 7). A trust was established for management of the land in the name of E.F Wilson, who was also to be the first principal of the school (Shingwauk Project 1992, 22). After the Anglican Diocese of Algoma was established in the area covering the northern shores of the Lake Superior, the trusteeship was turned over to Bishop Faquiere of the Diocese in 1875. Anglican Church thereby became the legal guardian of the Shingwauk Trust. The new Shingwauk Home opened its doors in 1875 (Shingwauk Project 1992, 22). A separate Wawanosh Home for girls was established in 1879 but was closed in 1911 when the girls were moved to Shingwauk (Shingwauk Project 1980, 17). In 1934 the old Shingwauk Home was demolished due to its deteriorating condition, and the new Shingwauk Hall was built. At that time the name of the school was also changed from Shingwauk Home to Shingwauk Residential School (Miller 1996, 7). Construction of the new school was funded by the Department of Indian Affairs, in exchange of part of the site being transferred from the Diocese to the federal government (Manore 1992).

Most of the Shingwauk students came from northern Ontario and northern Quebec. Until the 1950s the students would spend the whole school year, typically lasting from September or August until June, in the school (Shingwauk Project 1980, 22). In the 1950s the Shingwauk School became part of the government's integration scheme, and the students were gradually transferred to two public schools established on the trust land especially for the purpose of the integration program. By 1961 all students had transferred to public schools (Shingwauk Project 1980, 21). The students who had been brought to the residential school from remote communities would, however, reside at Shingwauk and continue in the half-a-day system, the older students leaving the public school after noon to return to work at Shingwauk. Due to lack of space in the residential school building, some older students were accommodated in local families (Auger 2005, 154; Shingwauk Project 1992, 24). The Shingwauk School was completely closed in 1970, a year after it had become operated by the federal government. After the closure of the

school, the site was returned from the Department of Indian Affairs to the Diocese, which further leased it to the Algoma University College. Commitment to cross-cultural education and collaboration with local indigenous communities were stated as conditions for the College to operate on the site (*ibid.* 26–27). During the early years of the University on the site it shared the space with an indigenous cultural centre, Keewatinung Institute, but the latter was evicted from the site in 1975 (*ibid.* 26). More about the years after the residential school are to follow in later chapters.

2.3 Addressing the legacy: from first testimonies to the TRC

The experience of residential schools as intergenerational and its impacts of alienating students from their cultural background and disturbing social relations of families have been connected with several factors undermining the wellbeing of indigenous communities. The forced cultural assimilation has been connected with devastating effects on the students' sense of their background, and thereby on intergenerational transmission of languages and cultural practices in indigenous communities (AFN 1994, 26; Miller 1996, 204). Experiences of abuse have been pointed to have led into for example mental health issues and addictions among former residential school students. Some examples of the more long-term impacts on communities are communication problems between generations, addictions and other health problems, and exceptionally high rates of suicides.[5] The system has also been pointed as the main cause for the loss of indigenous languages (TRC 2015a, 135–136; 153).

The first testimonies by former residential school students of their experiences were heard in public in the early 1990s. Probably the most well-known of those "early" testimonies was that of the National Chief[6] Phil Fontaine in 1990. Gradually more and more former students started to bring into public their experiences of grave issues such as physical, sexual or emotional abuse, harsh discipline and forced cultural assimilation. These testimonies took place at a time when the tensions between indigenous peoples and the

[5] However, as is reminded by McKegney (2007, 33) and Mackey (2013, 54), among others, these issues should be seen within a wider and more complex framework of colonial policies and structures - some of which are still influential today - rather than as a result of residential schools only. Otherwise there is a risk of pathologization of the conditions of indigenous communities, which may lead to justification for outside interventions that, in turn, reproduce colonial power relations (ibid. 53-54; see also Million 2013, 52).
[6] The chief of the Assembly of First Nations, the national organization of indigenous communities in Canada.

government of Canada had recently gained wide publicity due to the Oka Crisis[7] in 1990. In the aftermath of the crisis, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was established to investigate the tensions between the indigenous peoples and the government. The representatives of the RCAP traveled from community to another organizing public hearings, of which the findings were later compiled into a massive final report. The RCAP concluded that the IRS system had had a devastating impact on indigenous communities and on the relations between indigenous peoples and the government (RCAP 1996, 313). The RCAP also set recommendations to the federal government for addressing the impacts of residential schools, including a public inquiry and establishment a monetary fund for "funding for treatment of affected individuals and their families" (*ibid*. 366–367). These findings, in turn, intensified the public discussion around residential schools and led to the reformation of Canada's policies in relation to the indigenous peoples, manifested in the Statement of Reconciliation Canada delivered by the Minister of Indian Affairs, Jane Stewart, and the establishment of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation in 1998 (Canada 1998; Spear 2014, 18, 24; Niezen 2013, 34).

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation was established to manage the Aboriginal Healing Fund that was granted by the federal government to support community projects addressing the impacts of residential schools. The AHF supported financially various projects across the country and carried out its own research, publishing various collections of articles on addressing the impacts of residential schools (AHF 2017). The AHF finished its operation in 2008, and a place was being looked for to trust all of its collections. The CSAA had had a long-lasting and close relationship with the AHF, and the collections were eventually stored in the archives of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre.

Simultaneously with the emerging public discussion, several residential school survivors and survivor groups started taking the abuses suffered in the schools to the court. In the late 1990s, faced with the increasing amount of lawsuits, the federal government started to develop an Alternative Dispute Resolution Process (ADRP) to process the litigations against the government outside the court system (Niezen 2013, 36; Regan 2010, 121,

[7] A conflict between the town of Oka and a local Mohawk community of Kanesatake emerged from the plans of the town administration to extend a golf course on traditional burial lands of the Mohawk, and ended up into a military standoff between Mohawk protesters and police and military forces (Miller 2000, 380).

123). Dissatisfaction towards the ADRP among indigenous organizations led to negotiations for a compensation policy that would cover all former residential school students.[8] Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement was negotiated between the Assembly of First Nations and other indigenous organizations[9] and implemented in 2007 (*ibid.* 138, 141; Canada 2006). The key components of the agreement were Common Experience Payment (CEP), Independent Assessment Process (IAP), a public apology presented to survivors by the Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008, and the establishment of the TRC. The CEP was a compensation paid for each former student of residential schools who was able to prove their school attendance: 10 000 dollars for the first year of attendance and 3000 for every following year. The IAP, in turn, was a successor of the ADR, employed for processing claims of abuse based on hearing of the claimant by an adjudicator (Niezen 2013, 44–45; Canada 2018).

What has been argued by many former students, indigenous communities and organizations as well as many scholars is that the apology and the financial compensation are far from enough to make up for the impacts the residential schools on the lives of individuals and communities (see e.g. Spear 2014). The apology has been criticized for lacking real action behind it, and for having little symbolic value as recognizing the harmful impact of residential schools but not the wider colonial ideology of assimilation behind them (e.g. Henderson & Wakeham 2013, 12; Dorrell 2009, 28). Dorrell (2009, 29–30), argues that the apology "confines the abuses of the residential school system to the past" instead of recognizing it as a part of an "ongoing colonial project". Locating residential schools into the past has also been criticized for releasing the present actors, such as the government and the churches, from their responsibility for the legacy of the system (e.g. Mackey 2013, 48–49; Simon 2013, 136).

The TRC started its work in 2008, mandated to conduct a national investigation on residential schools based on the combination of administrative records and oral testimonies given by survivors. Another mission of the TRC was to promote restoration of respectful relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians and the government, by raising public awareness about residential schools and their impacts and

[8] The ADR covered only compensation claims for physical and sexual abuse and did not, for example, recognize the loss of culture and language as compensable damage caused by residential schools (e.g. Niezen 2013, 43).

[9] Organizations representing residential school survivors such as the Indian Residential School Survivors Society and the National Residential School Survivors' Society, and organizations representing the Inuit.

fostering engagement of non-indigenous Canadians in addressing these issues (TRC 2015a, 23). The TRC gathered testimonies from survivors in formal hearings across the country, and also organized national and community events in which survivors spoke about their experience in public. Before the TRC, there was relatively little awareness about residential schools among general public not having any personal connections to the topic. In this sense the responsibility of the TRC was very different from the other contexts where the same format has been implemented; most of the earlier truth commissions in different parts of the world have dealt with issues that have explicitly influenced the whole society (Niezen 2013, 4). The work of the TRC was officially completed in 2015, accompanied with publication of the final report, including "94 Calls to Action" (see TRC 2015a, 319) that were directed of both individual and collective actors in all areas of the society as recommendations on how to address the legacy of residential schools and to work on restoration of relations. In the same year the National Centre of Truth and Reconciliation was established at the University of Manitoba for preservation of the material gathered by the TRC and for further research.

Although the work of the TRC has ended, the work of reconciliation, according to latter, is still ongoing and requires active engagement from all Canadians as well as institutions from decision-making bodies to schools and museums (TRC 2015a, 184–5). The concept of reconciliation, however, has attracted a range of criticism over its vagueness and potential misinterpretations of its meaning. A common concern voiced especially by indigenous groups is that reconciliation will remain one-sided, non-indigenous Canadians not becoming actively engaged in the process (Regan 2010, 61). The concept of reconciliation has also drawn critique for involving the same dimension of closure as the apology (e.g. Henderson &Wakeham 2013, 8; Regan 2010, 17). Dorrell (2009, 37) criticizes the use of the concept in the context of indigenous-settler history in Canada, as *re*conciliation literarily refers to restoration of a once-existed peaceful state of relations while the whole existence of the Canadian state has been made possible through "dispossession of indigenous peoples". What all these critics emphasize is the need to accept the ongoing and incomplete nature of reconciliation as a process that involves recognizing existing colonial power structures and commitment to their deconstruction (Regan 2010, 17; Dorrell 2009, 38; Henderson & Wakeham 2013, 9). I will return to this discussion in the following chapters.

3 Field, data and methodology

My own interest in residential schools got its first "spark" during my first time in Canada while I was taking part in an undergraduate student exchange program in Thunder Bay, Ontario in 2013. That was when I first learnt about the schools, in the classes that I was taking at the university and through a documentary drama *We Were Children* (2012) [10] screened at a local indigenous film festival. Knowing that similar educational policy had been applied in Finland towards Sami children (see e.g. Nyyssönen 2014) – although on a much smaller scale than in Canada – the topic picked my interest. After returning to Finland, I continued trying to find out more about residential schools and following Canadian media content on the topic via online sources. Why I chose to focus on a community project had a lot to do with practical issues, such as outlining the research context and questions. Having made myself familiar with a lot of literature on the discussion about residential schools on political and public level[11], I was curious to find out how the history of the schools is being addressed locally in everyday interactions. My decision to try to find out a project or an organization somehow engaged in commemorating and raising awareness of residential schools was also due to practicalities of making contacts with potential interviewees. It was also a methodological question; as an anthropology student I had learnt to perceive culture – and within my theoretical framework, memory – as being produced in everyday social practices.

I found out about the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre by accident at the end of the year 2015 while I was searching for a potential organization to contact online. The description of the history behind the foundation of the Centre, together with its current mandate including both commemorative and educative elements, caught my attention. To my greatest surprise, I got an immediate and welcoming response to my emailed request on possibilities of conducting research in or in collaboration with the Centre, and some months later I was on my way. I spent three months on the Shingwauk site – or at the Algoma University – in the summer of 2016. Before going to details of the fieldwork and methodology, I will start with summarizing the history of the Centre to shed some light

[10] A film by Timothy Wolochatiuk, *We Were Children* (2012) is a dramatized representation based on real life experiences of two residential school students in the 1950s.
[11] For example, on compensation procedures, the Prime Minister's apology, and the TRC. See e.g. Dorrell (2009), Wakeham & Henderson (2013), Niezen (2013), Regan (2010).

on its current operations and purposes. The following account is based on archival material from the earlier years of the Shingwauk Project and the CSAA, and on interviews of their founding members and the staff members of the Centre.

3.1 Description of the research context

The Shingwauk Project, started in 1979, was aimed at producing a historical account about Shingwauk Residential School from student perspective by collecting material from former students and bringing them together in reunions on the school site. At the time when the Project was started, very few faculty members at the University were aware or willing to talk about the history of the site. The first contributions of the project were publication of a booklet *Shingwauk Hall – A History,* based on the material collected, and the first Shingwauk Reunion organized for former students in 1981. Since that there have been 11 more reunions that have later come to be called gatherings. The collections of the Shingwauk Project grew bigger after each reunion and a space was needed for them. The collections, jointly managed by the CSAA, Algoma University and the Ontario Indian Residential School Survivors Society (OIRSSS)[12] were integrated to Algoma University Archives in 2005 and the Residential School Research, Archives and Visitors Centre was founded in the same year. The CSAA as an organization has since its founding worked for healing and wellbeing of residential school survivors, and for preservation and raising awareness of the history of the Shingwauk School.

Something quite unique to this specific context is how the founding history of the school has been integrated to the agendas of both the Shingwauk Project and the CSAA. The history has also an officially recognized role in the contemporary operations of the Centre and the University, due to their location on the site of the residential school. Chief Shingwauk's vision of teaching wigwams became an official guideline for the institutions operating on the site by Shingwauk Covenant signed between the University and Shingwauk Education Trust (SET)[13] in 2006. The Algoma University thus has an official mandate of promoting cross-cultural and indigenous education (CSAA 2017).

[12] A more politically oriented organization based on the CSAA, founded in the early 2000s to work on legal processes developed for survivors to seek justice and compensation for abuse suffered in residential schools. Since 2011 there has been another organization – Ontario Indian Residential School Support Services – operating under the same letters. The original OIRSSS does not exist anymore.

[13] This organization, like the Centre, has its roots in the legacy of the residential school. SET is managing the Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, a partner institution of the Algoma University located on the site, focusing on indigenous studies.

The current Shingwauk Residential School Centre is located in the main building of the Algoma University, the original building of the Shingwauk Residential School, and managed by the University and the CSAA. Besides the collection of the Shingwauk Project, the Centre hosts for example a selection of literature related to residential schools and to other sociopolitical issues of indigenous peoples, material on other residential schools in Ontario, administrative records of the schools, and the collection of the AHF. These resources are available to the faculty and students of the University as well as to visiting students and researchers, educators and drop-in visitors. According to the staff of the Centre, very typical visitors are relatives of former students of the Shingwauk School looking for information on a certain student. The Centre organizes guided tours on the site for school classes and other visiting groups, for example from the provincial government, other universities or indigenous organizations. According to the staff and the founders of the Centre, one of their most important functions is to raise local awareness about the history of the place. Some of the educational events at the Centre involve a survivor, usually some of the actives of the CSAA, talking to the group about her/his experiences in residential school. Sometimes a survivor joins a guided tour telling the group about her/his memories related to specific places on the site. During the time of my research, the Centre also hosted a workshop called Project of Heart that student groups often attended as a part of their visit. In this workshop each student was given a small wooden tile that they were advised to decorate and devote to a residential school survivor or to a student who did not make it home from residential school.

According to the impression I got during my stay, the Centre appeared to have a significant role in keeping the history of the school known and visible. In addition to keeping their historical resources accessible to students and researchers, the staff of the Centre hold small exhibits about the residential school history in the school building. They also occasionally host travelling exhibitions or other events related to the residential schools and the history of indigenous peoples. The most important event of the year is the annual Shingwauk Gathering and Conference hosted by the Centre and the CSAA. Daily routines of the Centre consist largely of managing the collection, including arranging and digitizing photographs and documents. It came to me as a surprise how little the space and resources of the Centre appeared to be used by students of the University. However, this impression was obviously impacted by the timing of my fieldwork: in summer time there were naturally fewer students at the whole University than during the actual

semester. According to the staff members of the Centre, most typical student visitors are indigenous students with family background of residential schools.

3.2 Fieldwork

My research setting came to be largely defined by the practical possibilities of the field context. The research process took shape also according to various other factors, such as the length of my stay, ethical issues and research permit procedures. Outlining the "field" in a context such as this one was also rather challenging, when taking into account all the different parties involved in preservation of the history and memory of the Shingwauk School. Another challenge was the huge time-span of those practices that reached back to the early years of the Shingwauk Project in 1970s–80s. As for the Centre, I was able to observe its contemporary practices. My analysis on the earlier phases of the Shingwauk Project and the CSAA, in turn, are based on the recollections provided by the members that I interviewed, and on archival material. The school site itself offered a concrete setting which to focus on. These elements came to form my fieldwork.

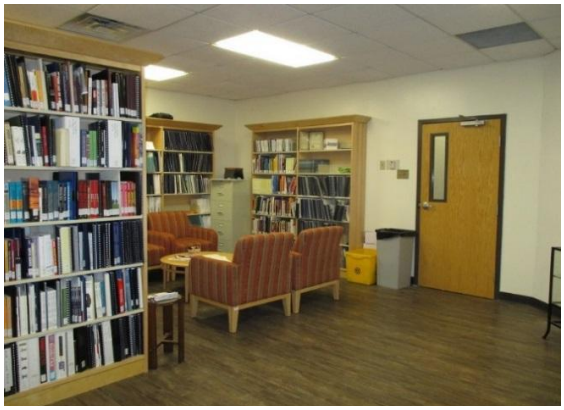

Figure 1. The Centre. Photo by the author

As the original focus of my research was on the Centre and its educational activities, I spent there most of the time that I used for the research. That meant practically up to 6 hours per day, 5 days-a-week. Having arrived in a completely new environment and knowing only a fraction about the history and activities of the Centre, I started the research in May by familiarizing with some archival material about the history and development of the Shingwauk Project, the CSAA and about the history of the Shingwauk School itself. In addition to talking with the staff of the Centre I met with some founding members of the Shingwauk Project and the CSAA who told me a lot about the early times and the history of the school. I attended as many of the events and educational sessions of the Centre as possible from the very beginning; especially at the beginning of summer most of those were guided tours held for local school groups.

My presence at the Centre involved going through archival material and literature on the topic, and attending guided tours, other educational sessions and special events. By

spending time in the Centre daily, I was also able to gain an impression of the social life of the place. This is how I got many opportunities to meet people having some kind of a history with the Centre or with the school when they would randomly visit the Centre. Another great opportunity was to be allowed to participate in some of the planning meetings of the Shingwauk Gathering and Conference organized at the end of July, as well as in the event itself. The Gathering was an intense experience from the perspective of an "outsider", and very informing for understanding the complex and continuing meanings of the past of the residential school in the present.

Recruitment of interviewees took place step by step. I aimed at including especially people who were at least somewhat regularly involved in the activities of the Centre to get an idea of their perception about purposes and meanings of their work. The first people to interview were the two regular staff members of the Centre, and soon after them some of the founding figures of the Project and the CSAA. As the history of the Centre and the network of different organizations involved in its past and present operation turned out to be a bit more complicated than what I expected, it was not that simple to outline whom to interview. Reachability of potential interviewees and practical arrangement of the interviews brought more challenge at times. Many "key figures" of the Shingwauk project and the CSAA were not regularly involved with the Centre anymore, and some of them also lived far away from the city.

My research did not involve consistent day-to-day engagement with a clearly defined community as a focus of the study in traditional ethnographic sense. However, I find that the three-month stay on the site helped me to form a more holistic impression of my research topic than if I had conducted the interviews and sessions of observation through shorter visits. Time spent in the Centre, even when I was not actively engaged in research, turned out fruitful in making contacts and learning more about the history of the place. I agree very much with Bernard's (2002, 346) remark on how "hanging out" may prove an essential part of fieldwork in gaining understanding of the research context and creating opportunities for learning and making contacts. As I stayed on the site for the most part of those three

Figure 2. On the daily walk from the residence to the Centre. Photo by the author.

months, I was able to form an impression of its general life also outside the research context. The University was, of course, rather quiet in the summer time. My possibilities to explore more deeply how the history of the place is reflected in the contemporary social life of the University were also to some extent limited due to other practical issues such as research permits. However, I was able to gain basic understanding of the position of the Centre in its context and the role that the history of the place had in its operation. Some of my interviewees as well as some other people whom I met through the research had a long history of living in Sault Ste. Marie or its surroundings. Discussions with them provided me with some understanding of the local context. Overall, the official data of this study is supported by "silent" background information gained from various informal interactions during my fieldwork period.

3.3 Data, methods and analysis

My main data consists of in total 10 thematic interviews, observation notes, and audio records of two informal discussions and two guided tours as well as of sessions at the Shingwauk Gathering and Conference. In addition, it covers photographs taken during the fieldwork and some pieces of archival material related to the early years of the Shingwauk Project and the CSAA, including for example articles, newsletters, and meeting minutes. Gathering of data and the analysis of it took place as partly overlapping processes in this project. I started preliminary analysis already while still in the middle of the fieldwork, following the approach of grounded theory. By marking themes that appeared to reoccur in the interviews and within informal interactions around me I was able to edit my interview scripts and my larger focus in the course of the fieldwork. After the fieldwork I started systematically analyze the data, continuing to sort it under broader themes and topics by combining methods of grounded theory and content analysis.

I conducted 10 interviews with 10 different people, of which two with the same person and one with two interviewees at once. The interviewees consisted of the founder of the Shingwauk Project, 2 staff members of the Centre, 6 first-generation survivors of whom 4 were active members of the CSAA, and 1 second-generation survivor. As I started the fieldwork with a rather broad focus, this was also reflected in planning of the interviews. I ended up applying thematic interviews that structured around broad themes rather than a list of detailed questions. This was in order to ensure that the main themes related to my research questions would be covered, but the interviewees would nevertheless have space

for free association and to have their part in directing the conversation. Themes and questions that were covered in the interviews varied according to the position of the interviewee in relation to the research topic. Interviews with the staff of the Centre, for example, focused more on its current operations whereas interviews with the actives of the CSAA and the Shingwauk Project concentrated also a lot on past activities. The extent to which the actual residential school experiences were discussed with the former students varied according to each individual situation. Usually I avoided asking direct questions, giving the interviewees space to bring about the topic if they wished.

As I stated earlier in this chapter, this study is not based on systematic participant observation if the latter is to be understood as "experiencing the lives of the people you study" (Bernard 2002, 324) through holistic participation in the life of a community. After all, I experienced a very limited part of the lives of the people who were part of my research. I would rather say that observation was one of the many elements forming the whole of my fieldwork. Bernard (2002, 327) perceives the method of participant observation by setting the roles of the researcher on a scale from "complete participant" to "participant observer" to "complete observer". I would say that my own position during the research fluctuated from one of these state to another. Especially when taking part to the educational sessions of the Centre involving school groups of minor children and youth, I tended to limit my role in that of passive observer paying special attention to privacy and anonymity of the visitors in my notes of the situation. In general, I documented my days at the Centre to a varying extent depending on the activity or visits taking place there and produced detailed descriptions of all the educational sessions and special events that I attended. In addition, I wrote down my general impressions and reflections, as well as descriptions of physical sites and elements that had a central role for example in the educational practices of the Centre.

A theme that became central for the research through the fieldwork and analysis was the significance of the Shingwauk site as both space of remembrance and as a physical carrier of Chief Shingwauk's vision of teaching wigwams. An interesting point was the responsibility for the continuity of the vision that appeared to be attached to the place through its history. A theme of continuity came up also in form of a concern expressed by several of the Alumni I interviewed about the continuity of their work. Another important aspect is what could be called reclaiming; the importance of the Alumni and indigenous groups in general having control over the operations at the former school site.

When it came to questions of awareness of general public about residential schools and their impacts, nearly all of the interviewees brought up their concern about the lack of that awareness. This was often accompanied with remarks on local unawareness about the history of the Shingwauk Residential School among local people and the university community. Residential schools and concepts related to official policies addressing them, such as reconciliation, are widely researched. Topics such as those mentioned above, however, bring up special characteristics that the discussion on residential schools gets in the local context.

Figure 3. Shingwauk Residential School, now the main building of Algoma University. The memorial in front of the school is dedicated to the first principal of the school, Rev. E.F. Wilson. The new memorial on the backside of the older one, facing the school building, commemorates the students of the school.

Photo by the author

3.4 Ethical considerations

The sensitivity of the research topic of this thesis as well as my own position as a researcher brought about various ethical concerns. From the beginning until the writing process one of the key ethical issues has been how to deal with such a sensitive topic with appropriate respect towards the people at the centre of the phenomenon studied – the former students of residential schools. Another ethical concern comes from my position as a white, European student studying issues of indigenous peoples, especially within the discipline of anthropology that has a long history of producing representations of "others" through our own categories of knowledge. It has been frequently stated by various indigenous scholars and activists across the globe that research on issues related to indigenous people conducted by others than themselves carries a risk of reproducing colonial categories of knowledge (E.g. Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 2; Battiste 1998, 23). The question is about who is allowed to speak for whom, and differing opinions exist about whether anyone else than indigenous scholars should actually carry out research on indigenous issues. In the Canadian context, Regan (2010, 41) discusses the position of settler Canadians in the reconciliation process and suggest adopting a position of admitted

"not-knowing" as a starting point for their relationship with indigenous people. This means reversing of the colonial mindset of indigenous people as "objects of knowledge" into that of holders and producers of knowledge that is not under control of someone else to appropriate (see also Battiste 1998, 18; Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 66).

I am, of course, here in a slightly different position as a foreigner and thereby to a great extent an outsider to the Canadian context of residential schools and their meaning for the history of the country. This outsider perspective makes it obvious that I cannot gain that deep insight into concepts such as "Canadian national identity or narrative" as a member of that society would be able to. However, I would still describe my position as that of a learner. Even though I am not an insider – so to say – in the Canadian residential school and reconciliation discussion, there is a lot to learn about power relations and decolonization on global scale as well as in comparison to my domestic context in Finland. While the Finnish government and the Sámi Parliament of Finland are at the moment preparing a truth and reconciliation process to deal with the history and relations of the state of Finland and the Sámi, the questions of national identity and historical narrative may become under critical attention in public discussion also in Finland (see Finland 2017, Sámi Parliament 2017). Going back to my role as a researcher, the learning aspect is also closely related to my sub-focus on meanings of the educational practices of raising awareness about residential schools. In that sense I was, in a way, an insider to my "field": telling about residential schools to me was obviously part of the educational practice that some of my interviewees are engaged in.

The way of outlining the focus of my research has had a lot to do with the previous questions. I have wanted to avoid appearing as trying to speak for the residential school survivors – which I am obviously not able to do as their experience has been something I have no chance to identify with. This has partly impacted the choice of focusing more on how residential schools are remembered and dealt with in the present than on what happened in them in the past. Of course, knowledge about the latter is an absolute prerequisite for the former. Finally, I recognize that it has been a privilege to be able to conduct research in such a facilitated setting. Opportunities such as the free use of the space and resources of the Centre and getting support for arranging interviews from the Centre and the OIRSSS have had a large part in making the outcome of this study possible. I am very grateful to all who supported my research during the fieldwork and who had shared with me their experiences and knowledge.

4 Uncovering the silence: intersections of local and national processes

In this chapter I will discuss the role local practices of remembrance can play in deconstructing and challenging silences in dominant narratives of colonial history. In this context, this means the process through which residential schools have turned from an unspoken and largely unrecognized part of Canadian history into a focus of public debates and initiatives of commemoration and redress. Looking especially at their early phases, I will explore how the local practices of remembrance around the Shingwauk Residential School have emerged in the interplay with this public discussion. To provide some background for further analysis in the following chapters, I will discuss how particular kind of frames have been constructed that enable remembering of the residential schools and articulating claims on its significance for the present. Reflecting on the relationship between history and memory as analytical concepts, I argue that these processes of construction of documented history and of social memory as everyday practice are mutually constitutive (see Cole 2001, 105; Lambek 1996, 242). With social memory I refer to ongoing engagement with the past embedded in social interaction rather than a static collective frame of thought (*ibid*. 339; Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 54). What is special about the Shingwauk Project is that it started long before residential schools became a matter of public discussion: the first Shingwauk Reunion was organized in 1981, nearly ten years before the first public testimonies by residential school survivors and 17 years before the TRC started its work. I argue that these local practices have contributed to producing social space for the topic within public discussion, as well as to historical documentation of the IRS system.

I will explore different elements of the local context, starting from the early phases of forming the community of survivors and a shared understanding of their residential school experience as the basis of all the following action. As those events took place already decades ago, I will focus on how they were reflected on in the interviews with the early actives of the CSAA and the Shingwauk Project. Then I will move on to the archival collections initiated by the latter, discussing their value as historical evidence and of the interplay between archival material and so-called living memory. After that I will discuss the special way in which the Chief Shingwauk's vision of teaching wigwams as the founding history of Shingwauk Residential School has been employed in the local context

to reframe the history of this particular school in a decolonizing spirit. In the last section of the chapter, I will focus on the role of the Centre and the Shingwauk Gatherings as social spaces for transmitting the memory of the school and constant reconstructing of its significance for the present and the future.

4.1 Reframing the residential school experience: reflections on the early years

When conducting interviews with the active members of the CSAA and the Shingwauk Project, I asked all of them about their experiences of the early times of the project and the organization. For those of the Alumni who had been active since the very beginning**,** the first Shingwauk Reunion in 1981 appeared as a starting point for all the following action. The reunion was regarded as an event that had originally brought the survivors together and enabled them to form a mutual understanding of their residential school experience. Don[14], the founder of the Shingwauk Project and one of the organizers of the first reunion, accompanied the Alumni with this view. In an interview he summarized the early development of the Project as following:

> So we had the reunion, and people came. And out of that we made the organization – and through the organization the idea of talking about the residential schools became possible – more and more people all over the country started to talk about it – there were other groups doing similar things in other parts of Canada, and gradually we brought them together.

According to these interviewees, the formation of the community of survivors and establishing the organization – the CSAA – had played an important part in bringing residential schools into public attention on national scale. The focus of this section is on how the Shingwauk Project and the CSAA in their early phases have contributed to forming a shared understanding of the residential school experience among survivors, consequently creating space for the emerging public discussion. I argue that these practices have formed an interface between personal memories and experiences of survivors and the public, political sphere in which the historical significance of residential schools has been evaluated. The question here is how something that may have previously appeared as private experiences of individual survivors have turned into a focus of social memory, situated in wider, historical and political framework (Kenny 1999, 432).

[14] The interviewees are presented with either their own names or pseudonyms, according to their own wishes. In order not to identify those presented with pseudonyms, only first names will be used of all interviewees.

Some of the survivors I interviewed told that they had not really "thought that much" about their residential school experience before reconnecting with other former students through the reunions. Most of them described how at the time of the first reunion in 1981 they had not visited the school site since leaving it after their graduation, and had not met anyone else from the school except their own siblings ever since. The first Shingwauk Reunion of 1981 was mostly recalled with warmth by those who had attended it; as an opportunity to renew friendships and share memories. Some of them also brought up the importance of coming back to the place that had been their home for several years. However, these same survivors also told about others for whom the reunion was less comfortable experience as well as of some who could not even consider coming back to the school. Irene, a survivor and one of the founding members of the CSAA, noted that as most of the former students coming to the reunion had not met each other for years or even decades, the event provided an opportunity to exchange news also about those former schoolmates who did not show up had been doing after leaving the school.

When being asked about their experiences of the first two Shingwauk Reunions in 1981 and 1991, the interviewees who had attended them described in rather uniform fashion that the first reunion was mainly about coming together and sharing experiences in positive sense. However, in the second reunion after ten years' break the negative memories of the survivors started to come up. The second reunion was organized at the time when survivors across the country started to bring their experiences in public, and the tensed relations between indigenous peoples and the government had recently gained wide public attention due to the Oka crisis in 1990. In his analysis on how personal memories communicate with the surrounding socio-political context and collective understandings of history, Kenny (1999) states that the public atmosphere for talking about residential schools at the turn of 1980s and 1990s was strikingly different from few decades earlier. Along the recently emerged historical documentation of and political activism on the schools, the system had come to be situated in a reframed context of colonial oppression and survival (*ibid*. 431). The emerging public space for talking about residential schools in the 1990s and sharing of personal memories and experiences among survivors in the local context were obviously adding to each other. Susie, another Alumni and a founding member of the CSAA, described the difference between the atmosphere of the two first Shingwauk reunions in 1981 and 1991 as following:

> —I was just so amazed that I saw all my old friends. So I went home with that idea, and never thinking it would happen again – well, that was in 1981, so 1991 we came back again for the second reunion and it was then that we realized that we had a unique situation in our lives that had happened. It still was not a national movement or anything like that at that point, but we formed together to help each other out and to help others because there were still former students who were still carrying that burden of abuse that they had endured here.

The way in which more critical discussion on residential schools and concrete testimonies of experiences of abuse experienced in the school started to come out only in the second reunion tells also about the need to create a safe space for sharing those experiences. Irene described how, according to her experience, both increasing public attention towards residential schools and the safe environment of the reunions contributed to encouraging more and more survivors to share their less fortunate experiences of the schools:

> So that's what I remember [of the first reunion], just happiness and joy – no ugliness, the ugliness all came out in the second reunion in 1991, that was when all that ugly stuff came out and the people felt that they need to talk about what happened to them – because it was starting to be talked about in the media and among the communities of the students – so because we were all together and we felt safe with friends, that's when all the abuse came out.

Both in and separate from the reunions, the Project and the Alumni also started to organize sharing circles[15] where the survivors could share and discuss their experiences in a safe and confidential environment. Shirley R., equally one of the early active members of the CSAA, described how hearing about the other survivors' experiences had encouraged herself as well as the other participants to set their own experiences of residential school in a larger context:

> —At that sharing circle at that time in Garden River it was absolutely – it was beautiful, you know, because so many of our survivors were able to identify with that pain they were carrying.

The examples given here illustrate how the early practices of the Shingwauk Project – especially the reunions – created social space for survivors of the Shingwauk School to come together, and to negotiate and form a shared understanding of their residential school experience. Observing several people having gone through similar struggles in their adult life supported the emerging understanding about the connection of those struggles with their experiences as residential school students. In the first reunion, the

[15] A traditional form of facilitated discussion practiced by indigenous peoples in North America. The participants sit in a circle and disclose each on their turn, without being interrupted by the others. Sharing circles are often used as healing methods, and sometimes accompanied with traditional ceremonies (Hart 1996, 67–68).

emerging understanding of residential school experience as something collective was shaped by not only by shared memories of the school times but also by accounts of what had happened in the former students' lives after school. I would view the organization of survivors through the reunions as formation of a *community of memory* that, according to Irwin-Zarecka (1994, 49) provide frames for social remembrance based on a shared understanding of the meaning of a past event. A shared memory of a community is not to be understood as a closed system reproduced exclusively among the members of the community, but the "realities of the past" are negotiated in relation to public framings and individual experiences of past events (*ibid*. 56, 52). Looking at the accounts of the second reunion, survivors' personal experiences of residential schools came to be set in a larger, historical context of intentional colonial policies directed at indigenous peoples**.** Irene, although recalling her own school experience rather warmly in the interview, summarized her contemporary understanding of the purpose of the schools in less positive tone: "— I know now what the purpose of the school was, I know now that it was wrong – it was an act of genocide and devastating to the families and to the students." The survivors' reframed understandings of their school experience, then, came to cover the impacts of residential schools on indigenous communities and their significance for the relations between the indigenous peoples and the government (see Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 49; Kenny 1999, 431).

In this context of the formation and organization of the Shingwauk Alumni as a community, formation of shared memory becomes intertwined with reconstructing residential schools as a historical event. Development of such a shared historical consciousness was to become a basis for political organization and action of residential school survivors. According to Tuhiwai Smith (2012, 201), for indigenous decolonization projects a consciousness of past injustice is the first condition for the "struggle for decolonization". When Susie described her personal involvement in educating different kinds of publics about residential schools, she viewed the formation of the CSAA through the reunions as the initial source of that action: "—Those opportunities, I feel, stem from that first reunion, and then our first decision to stick together as a group and to call ourselves the Children of Shingwauk – it's come from all of that." Mike, also one of the founding members, described his impression of the course of the events as following:

> A lot of things happened then, you see – that [the first reunion] was the first step, or the first occurrence or whatever – of residential school students getting together – and what it did was it created a movement, that went right across this

> country (…) so all of a sudden this hit, like, 'hey, you know what happened in Sault Ste. Marie – those guys got together' (…) and very soon it was like, the whole country was on fire about that, of residential schools – and well, we set it here (…) and again, it was by default or quite innocently – we never really intended that.

The early reunions and other actions of the CSAA and the Project can be viewed as having contributed to creating space for residential school survivors as both historical and political subjects. This process has been based on formation of a common understanding of a shared experience, intertwined in collection of material proofs of that experience, and the emerging public recognition of it (see Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 49; Lambek 1996, 241). In the next section I will continue my analysis about the interplay of history and memory, this time focusing on the formation and the further use of the archival collections of the Shingwauk Project.

4.2 To prove and to remember: Shingwauk Archives

The first reunion was employed not only to create space of sharing experiences for former students but also to gather up more information about the residential school by asking the participants bring with them photographs and other objects from their school times for future preservation. In the reunion this material was publicly displayed which, according to Don, evoked very positive reactions from the participants. In the interview he described how some of the people saw pictures of themselves or objects made by them they had not seen since their childhood. There were also several staff members of the residential school attending the first reunion who brought with them things like drawings and handicrafts made by students in the school. The collection of material did not end in the first reunion. The pictures or copies of them and the objects donated were preserved. At that point there was no intentional plan for systematic collecting, but the same procedure of asking participants for bringing in memorabilia and setting them on display was repeated in the following reunions of 1991 and 1996. As Shingwauk reunions and the Alumni started to gain publicity, they started to receive donations of residential school-related material also from other sources such as families and private persons who had accidentally come across old pictures in their storage. In the interview, Shirley R. was recalling the accumulation of the collections of photographs:

> They asked [in the invitation to the first reunion] each one of us if we had any photographs. So that's how our archives started. It was by each student bringing some photographs of what they had, you know – even if it was one – if it was more it was good – but that's how our archives got started because there was a

> lot of pictures that came in then. And they took them and gave them back, before copied them and then gave them back, you know –they didn't just give them to us, you know, they were loaned to us to record them in – to photocopy them in, to put them in books. Yea – and after that and after each reunion – then the books got plentiful…

While having this interview with Shirley, we were sitting in armchairs by the entrance of the Centre, right next to a shelf in which a few of these "books" stand ready to be browsed by visitors. In this section I will discuss the role of the collections in remembrance of residential schools and production of historical knowledge about them. According to what I learnt during my three-month visit to the Centre, the collections have proved valuable for several different kinds of purposes during their more than three decades of existence. The material memorabilia and especially photographs were viewed very important by the organizers and the participants of the first Shingwauk Reunions in terms of evoking memories of the shared residential school experience among survivors. Later, the material has been used for displays, educational purposes, research and media content to name some. An important aspect has been the use of pictures and school records as supportive evidence for legal action: first in court cases filed by survivor groups towards the federal government and the churches in 1990s, and later in the procedures of survivors applying for financial compensation via programs included in the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement.

Having started their collections at the time when there was very little if any systematic historical documentation on residential schools, especially from the perspective of students and indigenous communities, the Shingwauk Project and the Alumni have engaged in production of that documentation. In several theories of social memory, memory as lived, experienced and communicated by people is often separated from written history and archival records (e.g. Halbwachs 1992[1925]; Nora 1989; Connerton 1989). Connerton (1989, 13–14), for example, separates between social memory and historical reconstruction, arguing that the latter shapes the former for example through dominant narratives of national history whereas "historical reconstruction is not dependent on social memory". Lambek (1996, 242) criticizes the strict memory/history dichotomy for associating memory directly with authentic experience of past, and history as a constructed narrative detached from first-hand experience. Lambek argues instead that both history and memory should be perceived as narrative constructions, "mutually informing each other" (*ibid.* 241, 243; see also Olick & Robbins 1998, 110). Hamilton (2003) refers with the concept of historical consciousness to "a sense of living in time or

being a subject of history" that is inseparable of the act of remembering. That is, individuals situate themselves in the course of time through understanding of their position in history and through memory that is supported by material artefacts (*ibid*. 137).

In this context, what the practices of Shingwauk Project and the Alumni can be said to have started is formation of social memory of residential schools together with starting to construct a documented history of the institution based on survivors' perspective. If two separate processes can be talked about, at least they appear as mutually constitutive. In the interview when discussing the continuity of the CSAA as an organization and of the work they had done, Susie viewed preservation of the collections as one aspect of this, stressing their value as historical evidence:

> I believe that the fact that we have a room in this building that houses all the residential school documents and historical, you know, things that go along with it – there needs to be a place for that, you just can't get rid of it overnight and take it to the dump and say 'ok, that part of history is gone' so – and there needs to be a body of people to take care of that make sure that story's still alive and not to let it be negated into nothing.

Permanence of an archival record, if perceived in Paul Ricoeur's (2004, 38) words, "an external point of reference" in which a reminder of past is embodied, gives it value in supporting the continuity of memory as a counterforce to forgetting and ignorance. With "reminder" Ricoeur refers to a reference towards something to be done, that consequently secures against forgetting (*ibid*. 38). In addition to documenting the history of residential schools, the archival collections gain significance in both shaping and representing the shared memory of survivors formed alongside the formation of the community of the Alumni. When it comes to the present circumstances where residential school survivors are getting older, a common concern appears to be shared over "keeping the memory of residential schools alive" in the future, significance of documentation apparently becomes even more important, alongside with and intertwined with transmitting the memory through social practices. As Susie emphasized, it is not enough that the documentation exist but it needs to be accessible to public as well as being taken care of by someone in order not to end up neglected and forgotten.

Another perspective on the role of the collections in remembering and reclaiming the past of residential schools is that the Shingwauk archives serve as a resource available to survivors and their descendants across the country. There are still people lacking information of their relatives who had attended residential schools, as well as survivors

only starting to deal with their own experience. During the three summer months at the Centre, I would time and again witness the staff receiving calls inquiring for information about a missing relative who might have attended the Shingwauk School. Helping family members of former residential school students to find information was pointed by the staff members of the Centre as one of the most important long-term mission of the place. According to them, some of the most common visitors are indigenous students of the University who had personal connections to residential schools through family relations. Krista, a staff member of the Centre, told in the interview about a photo identification project that the Centre and the CSAA have been running since the early 2000s:

> —it started focusing on the residential schools that were in [the town of] Spanish, Ontario – it kind of came about because we have thousands of images relating to that residential school – except of those thousands of images only a very small portion of them had names written on them, and so we were working to take those photos into the community, and give them to people to identify individuals in them.

The identification of the previously unnamed students in the pictures could be counted as "filling in the gaps" in the existing documentation on residential schools, and thereby contributing to strengthening the position of residential school students as historical subjects. Moreover, in addition to personal significance, the value of the archival material as a concrete proof of attendance in residential school has proved an important tool for seeking justice to some survivors. Going back to the political context of the early 1990s, with the emergence of legal actions against the government and the churches by former residential school students and the growing public awareness about residential schools and their impacts, the evidence value of any proofs of residential school attendance started to gain new importance. Mike recalled that at that time, "when all court actions were setting and all that other stuff – the archive material became very important, because what it was doing it was supporting our role as we moved towards court and suing the government and churches—". School records and pictures gained significance as concrete proof of the attendance of a student in residential school, supporting the credibility of the claims of survivors. Later after 2007 at the time of the Common Experience Payment (CEP) and the Independent Assessment Process (IAP), the Centre and the Alumni were supporting individual survivors who needed help with gathering documentation for their compensation claim. The Centre possessed some administrative records that could include information about the survivor in question. In addition to that, as some survivors seeking to file compensation claims did not necessary have records of their time in

residential school, pictures from the collections could be used as substitutive evidence. Krista recalled these processes in the interview:

> —a lot of the quarterly returns or administrative records and student lists we'd go through and help try to find the student's name on it, and that's also where the photos came very helpful – that you could find a photo of person during their time in residential school – that could back up as a proof that they were there.

These compensation procedures in themselves can be regarded as part of the public negotiation of the historical and political significance of residential schools and subject positions involved (e.g. Niezen 2013, 42–43). However, the latter is too broad question to be discussed in detail here. Going back to the theoretical juxtaposition between remembering as social practice and historical documentation, the former examples show that the two are deeply intertwined in this context. These particular archival collections that have been created as a part of the process of survivors forming a shared memory of their experience have since gained value as both historical evidence and as reminders and affirmations of the memories of those who experienced the schools. Both the latter functions, in turn, are being made possible through having people to manage the material and resources to keep it accessible.

Moreover, this process of historical documentation can be set into a wider context of indigenous groups challenging the histories written about them by colonizers. According to Tuhiwai Smith (2012, 35–36), for example, getting to know their own perspectives on history is crucial to indigenous peoples' "struggle for justice". Going to Trouillot's (1995, 29) ideas on how silences created in different phases of history production reflect the prevailing power relations, "silences" in documentation of the residential schools have emerged at various points, starting already from the time the schools were in operation. Student records of the schools, for example, were poorly kept in many of the schools, some of them have been destroyed, and since the operation of the schools ended the government and churches have been rather reluctant to release the records they are holding (Carr 2009, 116). Material traces supporting representations of indigenous perspective on colonial histories can thereby be employed for challenging the dominant, colonial narratives. The practices of documentation and collection of the Shingwauk Project and the Alumni could be regarded as a local context in which such a challenging narrative has been constructed, within the mutually supportive processes of documentation and remembrance of the Shingwauk Residential School. In other words, storing material traces of the past into archives in this context does not necessarily

separate them from "living memory" (see e.g. Nora 1989, 7–8) but becomes integrated in it as it works for validating claims on history that challenge dominant narratives as well as supports continuity of the memory.

4.3 Shingwauk's Vision as a narrative frame for the local history

In this section I continue the discussion on challenging narratives and reframing of history, focusing on the role the special founding history of the Shingwauk Residential School has gained in such processes in the local context. Bringing up the aspect of reclaiming, I will focus on how this founding history has been employed for redefinition of the meaning of the past in a way that challenges stereotypical colonial power positions by underlining indigenous agency and self-determination.

The Chief Shingwauk's vision of a "teaching wigwam" for sharing knowledges between the indigenous peoples and settlers still functions as a guideline for the CSAA and the Centre, as well as for the University operating on the site. Nowadays the interpretation of the vision appears to be updated to refer to understanding and mutual learning not only between Indigenous people and settlers but generally between people of different cultural backgrounds. The staff members of the Centre, for example, highlighted the importance of making also international students aware of the history of the place and thereby contributing to their knowledge about the history of Canada and reducing prejudice towards the indigenous peoples. For the CSAA, Shingwauk's vision is not only a moral obligation determining the purpose of the school site and the work of the organization, but a spiritual vision:

> We believe that this Institution of Shingwauk was founded for the benefit of the First Peoples of Turtle Island. We view the Shingwauk Vision as a spiritual commitment that predates the Confederation and that binds us together in a spiritual and moral obligation to perpetuate the spirit of the Trust and to preserve and ensure the continued fulfilment of the Vision of Chief Shingwauk through the promotion of the well-being of the Institution and of the Shingwauk family members. ("Declaration of the Children of Shingwauk", in *Shingwauk Alumni News* 1999. CSAA 1999.)

As I acknowledge that the deeper spiritual essence of Shingwauk's vision is beyond my knowledge and understanding, I will not try to analyze it with more detail than what I have been told by my interviewees. I will thus focus here more on how the vision is being referred to in articulations of continuity of the purpose the Shingwauk site. In contemporary rhetoric such as in the above text, the vision is viewed as something older

than the residential school as the colonial institution it came to be. Held as the original source for the initiative of establishing the school, the vision is being regarded as a broader narrative frame in which the era of the Shingwauk Residential School is only one phase on a way to fulfilling the vision. Through the position of the vision in determining the management of the site and guiding the practices of the Alumni and the Centre, the present and future purposes of the practices come to be defined in relation to it. Here I would like to bring about two concepts introduced by Tuhiwai Smith (2012) in the context of indigenous decolonizing projects to be included in indigenous research: those of *envisioning* and *reframing*. With envisioning Tuhiwai Smith refers to shared visions for better future among indigenous groups, sometimes formed long time ago, that are being employed for connecting people to pursue for a shared mission based on that vision. Envisioning involves potential for a shared political intention and a sense of power to change things (*ibid.* 153). Reframing, in turn, refers to indigenous people taking control on how public discussions concerning them are being framed (*ibid.* 154). The way Shingwauk's vision has come to give a meaning for the past as well as the present and future of the Shingwauk Residential School provides an illustrative example of such reframing. Connected to a larger historical framework of colonization, the reframed narrative of the history of the school comes to emphasize indigenous agency instead of just the assimilation and oppression by the system.

In its contemporary application, the vision is still viewed as a guideline for the future; the Shingwauk Gathering and Conference of 2016 that I attended, for example, was named "Fulfilling the Vision". Having the honour to take part in the organizational meetings for the reunion, I could observe concerns voiced over the continuity of the work of the Alumni in raising awareness about residential schools and strengthening collaboration on the site for cross-cultural learning. In terms of these objectives, however, in the interviews several of the Alumni expressed pride in their achievements so far. Susie emphasized the position of the CSAA as among the first residential school survivor organizations in Canada having started to address their past and the contributions of the Alumni in shaping public awareness about residential schools:

> —so I think that it's unique work that we have done here, plus we have the survivors who are willing to go out and speak if called on – so I really believe that the organization itself has evolved into something that we never dreamed of, and yet it's the fulfillment of Chief Shingwauk's Vision – that we should share,

> you know, our learning and out teachings with other cultures and work together, I believe that's what we've done.

The Alumni are being regarded as the primary carriers of the vision, bound in fulfilling it through their relationship to the residential school. This brings the former students of the residential school into the position of key agents instead of passive objects of the system within the history of the school. In this sense reframing is also reclaiming; the former students are taking control of and determining what is to be made of the history of the institution they were once subjected to. Their experience of the school is set as a part of not simply a history of an oppressive institution, but, like Don put it in the interview, of a wider, meaningful continuum. Campbell (2014, 101) remarks that an essential dimension of the assimilative purpose of residential schools was to erase the intergenerational memory of indigenous communities by preventing languages, knowledges and traditions from being passed on. The vision, in turn, involves a completely opposite purpose of securing their transmission. As the Alumni have taken up the responsibility to ensure that the mission of cross-cultural learning will be continued on the site and that what happened in the schools will not be forgotten, they have both challenged the original purpose of the school system and reversed the power relations it was based on.

What is also important of the vision itself is that it has not been suppressed by the institutional assimilation represented by residential schools. The concept of survivance was introduced into the field of indigenous literature originally by Gerald Vizenor (2008), referring to indigenous narratives combining elements of survival and resistance. The contemporary narrations of Shingwauk's vision in this context involve a similar element. Taking into account the historical context, the initiative of securing self-determination of Chief Shingwauk's people through education, this aspect of self-determination can be regarded as one element of the continuity of the vision in the contemporary context. This is what Don underlined when he explained to me about the sociohistorical conditions in which the initiative for the residential school originally came about. In the interview, he set the early actions of the Shingwauk Project in relation to the initial purpose of the School, that of securing indigenous self-determination and cross-cultural learning:

> What you could say in one way – The Shingwauk Project didn't begin in the 1970s. The Shingwauk Project began in the 1830s. Ok? When the first school was built in 1833–34 here in Sault Ste. Marie. (…) So what we did when we brought the people together in 1981 – the first gathering – that was just a new

> phase – that was supposed to be a post-colonial phase of this thing that had been started long before, by Shingwaukonse.

Discussing how narratives of the past are employed for understanding and explaining the present, Connerton (2011) compares two partly overlapping types of historical narratives: narratives of legitimation and narratives of mourning. With the former he refers to way in which present order is legitimated by past events, whereas the latter type of narratives are about making sense of past suffering (*ibid.* 3, 17). Connerton also notes, however, that "---narratives of legitimation and narratives of mourning are not necessarily separate categories, but often go together" (*ibid*. 27). The ways in which the history of the Shingwauk Residential School and the site appear to be narrated by those working on preserving its memory contain features of both types. The way in which residential schools as an institution and their infamous legacies on Indigenous people are viewed could be regarded as a narrative of mourning. On the other hand, this "narrative of mourning" also works for legitimation of a desired present condition, that of survivors defining the present and future purpose of the site of the former residential school. And if the history of the Shingwauk Residential School is to be approached from the perspective of the original purpose articulated in Shingwauk's vision, it could also be regarded to some extent as a "narrative of legitimation". In the following quote from the project report of the CSAA to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (2003), their right of determination on the site is articulated in terms of survivor's own healing of the past experience, and of Shingwauk's vision and the role of the Alumni themselves as fulfilling it:

> —Our journey back to the Schools, however painful, is part of our healing, as is our reclamation of them. We should be the ones who decide what becomes of the Schools. In our case we are determined to implement Dan Pine's vision that "the School has to put back what it took away". That we are now able to participate as equals in fulfilling this vision and in truly establishing Chief Shingwauk's "Teaching Wigwam" is part of our healing. (CSAA 2003)

Fulfilling of Shingwauk's vision appears as something that was left undone by the residential school, entailing that the same work must be continued on the site. The vision thus comes to represent continuity through both time and place, and employed as the basis for moral claims on the place. I will discuss the Shingwauk site as a place of transmitting and negotiating the memory and history of the residential school in chapter 5. Here working to fulfill Shingwauk's vision is framed as a way of dealing with the legacy of residential schools, connected with the respect of survivors' experiences and their

personal healing processes. This is also illustrated clearly in the slogan of the Shingwauk Project, inherited by the Shingwauk Residential School Centre: “sharing, healing, and learning”. However, I do not wish to view the vision here as a static narrative. As viewed in the examples above, although providing with frames for the narration of the history of Shingwauk Residential School and guiding the practices of the Alumni and the Centre, it is also being shaped by those practices. In the next section I will focus especially on how the memory of the Shingwauk School *and* of the Alumni and the Shingwauk Project are being transmitted and reconstructed in social spaces and practices (Lambek 1996, 242).

4.4 Keeping up the work of remembering: the Centre and the Gatherings

When I interviewed the Alumni about their work in the organization, what was made clear by them is that the work is still ongoing; both in terms of addressing the impacts of and raising awareness about residential schools. Although the topic has gained space in public discussions and historical accounts, the structures of silencing run deep. Memories of survivors, for example, keep still being challenged in the public sphere (Campbell 2014, 168). In the local context, this has been reflected in negotiations with the university over to what extent the history of the place should be taken into account in its current operations. A challenge that the Alumni and the Centre are engaged in, then, is not only uncovering the silenced past but to keep up the work of active remembering. For the survivors I interviewed, this included among other things their descendants taking part in passing on the memory of their experience, to ensure that it will not be forgotten. Susie, while I interviewed her and her and her son Jay, pointed that it was already time for the next generation to take charge of the organization: "Now I'm the older generation and the younger generation is needed to continue the work that we had begun so many years ago." Jay, who had only recently been appointed as the president of the CSAA, strongly agreed with his mother: "This whole story needs to be told, it needs to continue and I wanna be part of that." In this section I will focus on how the memory of Shingwauk Residential School is produced and reproduced in the local context.

According to Connerton (1989, 39), when studying the formation of social memory, it is most important to focus on the “acts of transfer” that make it possible for a shared memory to persist. Following Halbwachs (1992), Connerton continues that as remembering happens through frameworks of a social group, memories are “located in mental and material spaces” of those groups. Connerton focuses on “non-inscriptive” forms of

transmitting memories, and views transmitting of social memory as primarily consisting of repetitive, performative practices (*ibid*. 5, 40). Although Connerton discusses mainly official commemorative ceremonies in transmittance of national narratives, I find this focus on the actual acts of transfer useful also for my own research contexts. Combining it with Irwin-Zarecka's (1994, 57) notion about the significance of the social practice of telling memories in forming "communities of memory", I will briefly discuss the Centre and the annual Shingwauk Gatherings as social spaces of transmitting the memory of the Shingwauk School. I want to underline that what is at stake here is not a static narrative being passed along unchanged. I rather argue that in these spaces and occasions of transfer the memory of the school is, in Lambek's (1996, 242) words, "always in the act of being made", continuously gaining new meanings within the varying circumstances in which it is brought up in acts of retellings taking place within social interactions.

The Centre

According to the impression that I gained during my fieldwork, the Centre appeared as an important connecting space for the people involved with the old residential school. When scheduling interviews, the most natural place for them often appeared to be "the Archives". I can, for example, recall preparing for an interview with Mike by a table and armchairs in the corner of the Centre, me arranging my notes and recorder and Mike turned to chat about the plans for the upcoming gathering with the staff of the Centre. Besides being a convenient space for meetings, the Centre was frequently visited by the Alumni and other people involved with the place in a way or another. The Alumni I interviewed appeared to regard the existence of the Centre as crucial to maintaining their memory of the school and to transmitting it to others; as Susie put it, to "make sure that the story is still alive".

Regarding the Centre as a social space for people involved in practices of remembrance around the Shingwauk School coming together, it follows that it is also an important space for reproducing and transmitting the memory of the school. According to Irwin-Zarecka (1994, 57) telling of memories is what to a great extent maintains communities of memory. One part of what is practically being transmitted in the interactions taking place at the Centre are accounts of the Alumni of their own residential school experiences. Those accounts are both being re-told by the Alumni themselves while taking part in the educational programs and referred to by the staff of the Centre either in the educational

context as well as in informally among themselves. Sandra, a staff member of the Centre, described her learning through Mike's story of his school experience:

> —Every time I listen to Mike talking to a group I learn something new about his experience. His experience is so… complicated and so traumatizing and, like, so many things happened during his residential school experience that every time he talks to you, you learn something new about it and Krista has even said that she'll learn something new every time she hears him – and she's been doing this for a little while.

A particular context of such retellings, both first and second-hand, is provided on the guided tours held by the staff of the Centre on the site. The tours appeared to follow a rather established script: the same topics being usually brought up at given spaces, often accompanied with references to accounts told by survivors. The tours and presentations given to visiting groups about the history of the place can be regarded as an example of how memory is being retold and performed, in order to be shared and transmitted among people both familiar and unfamiliar with it (Connerton 1989, 40). In addition to their educational objective, such repetitive performances can be viewed as acts of reconstruction and transmitting the memory *among* the staff of the Centre. Besides the history of the Shingwauk School, the story of how the Centre itself came into being is repeated as part of them, starting from the beginnings of the Shingwauk Project and based on the accounts of its founding members:

> I sit again in the same row, close to the door. Krista begins with the slide show, this time the first slide is titled "Gathering the history of residential schools". She explains what the Centre is and how it came into being, telling first about Don's arrival at the university in 1970s: how he was thinking to come to a brand-new university but arrived in an old building of which nobody could give a definite answer of what had been there before, and how only when getting to know local First Nations people he learnt about what had actually happened on site. She goes on to explain how they developed this idea that something should be done for commemoration of what had happened there and how it lead to the first reunion. (Field notes, 8 June 2016)

As is illustrated by this piece of description of a presentation given by Krista to a school class before taking them for a tour, retelling the memory of the school through this kind of performative actions also involves reconstructing the narrative of *how* and *why* the school has become a focus of commemoration. These acts of reproducing the "memory of the memory", I argue, are vital to maintaining a sense of connection and continuity among the people actively involved in these practices of remembrance (see Lambek 1996, 242). Returning to the concepts suggested by Irwin-Zarecka (1994, 57), they work for

reproducing the community of memory, in this context for example by referring to such 'foundational moments' as the first reunions or Don's arrival on the site. Reconstruction of such foundational moments can be regarded as reconstruction of the initial groundings of shared memory: why it is important to remember. Moreover, repeated performances of certain memories involve articulation why they still matter and deserve to be retold. In such retellings, the continuity and foundations for the shared memory are re-affirmed: survivors' experience of the school as the basis for the work of remembering, and the history of residential schools as something that people should know about. That is, they involve articulation of the significance of the past for the present and future (Connerton 1989, 45; Lambek 1996, 248). Here I will continue to another context of reconstructing the significance of this local history: the annual Shingwauk Gathering and Conference, formerly known as reunions.

The Gatherings

The Shingwauk Gatherings are nowadays organized nearly annually. In addition to a reunion of former Shingwauk students and their families, they include an element of conference, bringing together academics and activists working on residential school-related issues. The program consist of such elements as talks given by survivors, workshops or facilitated discussions on both historical and timely topics related to residential schools, and displays of photos from residential schools and from the earlier gatherings.

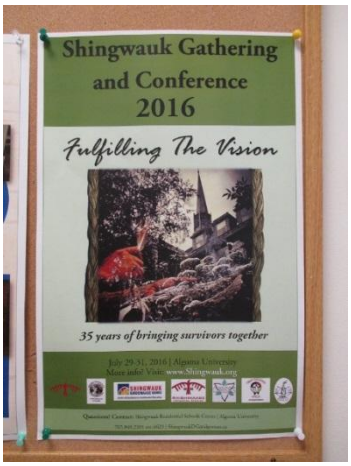

Figure 4. Photo by the author.

Having survivors gathering together to share their memories and renew bonds, the gatherings could be viewed as social spaces of reproducing the community of the Shingwauk Alumni and thereby supporting continuity of the memory of the Shingwauk School (see Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 55). In his analysis on commemorative ceremonies, Connerton (1989, 70) argues that as one dimension of such ceremonies "the community is reminded of its identity as represented by and told in a master narrative". Although the

"narrative" at stake here is quite far from the master narratives of national histories that Connerton refers to, I find his perspective on affirmation of the community formed around a certain narrative of their shared past through commemorative events applicable here. As with the educational and everyday practices of the Centre, it is also the "story" of the Alumni and the Shingwauk Project that is being re-told in the Gatherings. Set in the context of Shingwauk's vision, the narrative of this history involves an articulation of the mission of promoting cross-cultural learning that is still underway. What is repeated in the Gatherings is thus also articulation of claims on continuity between the past, the present, and the future; something that Connerton (1989, 45) argues is an essential element of commemorative rites.

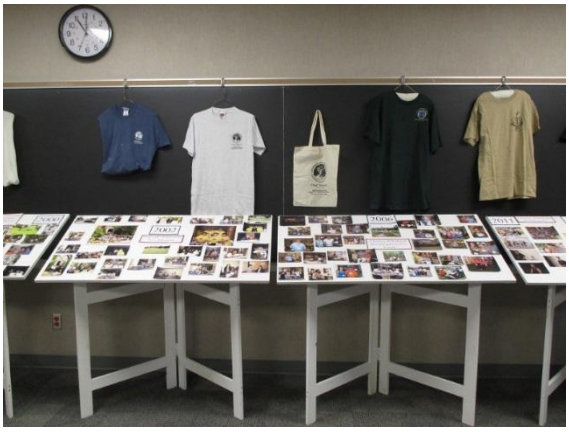

Figure 5. The whole story in display: picture installations from previous gatherings in the Shingwauk Gathering of 2016. Photo by the author.

Named illustratively as *Fulfilling the Vision,* the Gathering of 2016 that I participated in provides with a curious example of a social space where reconstructing memory and affirmation of the "community that remembers" are very explicitly concerned with the future besides the past. Having been allowed to take part in the planning session of the Gathering, I could observe a shared objective among the organizers to evaluate the current state of the work that the CSAA had been committed to for keeping the memory of this particular residential school alive and for addressing the legacy of residential schools in general. As was brought up by Shirley R., Irene and Susie, whom I interviewed not too long before the gathering, this had also to do with engaging younger generations, especially the descendants of survivors, in carrying out the work of remembering and raising awareness. The program of the Gathering was divided under the headings of "Past", "Present", and "Future". In addition to the current stage of the work of the Alumni, the program was concerned with evaluating the needs to address the legacy of residential schools on broader scale. Some of the sessions labelled under "Future", for example, were looking into topics concerning contemporary indigenous youth that were connected with the legacy of residential schools: such as a workshop focusing on the tools for young people to learn about their culture in order to support their identity as indigenous people.

What is illustrated here is that the temporal focus of practices of remembrance – or in this special case, commemorative events – is not exclusively on the past. This particular Shingwauk Gathering provides a concrete example on how remembering deals equally with present and future, involving re-evaluation of the significance of the past from present perspective and interplay of continuity and change (Campbell 2014, 148). In a context such as this Gathering, the current moment is set in relation to a narrative of the past expected to be shared by the participants of the event, and to prospects concerning the future. Following from the latter, the memory that is being transmitted in this kind of occasions is dynamic rather than static. Gatherings can be viewed as spaces in which the memory of Shingwauk School and residential schools in general are not only retold but also reconstructed. Present circumstances shape the ways in which the past is being dealt with, and the same happens the other way around (Connerton 1989, 2).

In this whole chapter I have tried to shed light on how the Shingwauk Residential School has become subject to social practices of remembrance and memory claims. This process, I have argued, has taken place in intersections of local level practices of remembrance and historical documentation, and negotiations of the significance of residential schools in public, political sphere. Through the examples introduced in this chapter, I have attempted to view memory as dynamic and changing instead of remaining as a static narrative; as practice inseparably tied to social relations and communication between people (Lambek 1996, 239). Applying both to the local context and remembrance of residential schools on a broader scale, there will be no memory unless there are people who remember. This is where we get to the connecting theme of the two following analysis chapters: an ongoing concern that was brought up by my interviewees was how to make that memory meaningful to and participated by also other people than those who actively seek engagement with it. In the following chapters I am going to discuss this objective of "keeping the memory alive" in two different, although overlapping contexts; first, the old school site as a place of memory, and second, educational programs of the Centre as social spaces of transmitting and negotiating memory.

5 "That's where people ought to remember things": the old school, memory and place

The focus of this chapter will be on place, the site of the former Shingwauk Residential School, as a concrete foundation of shared memory and a social space where different claims on the significance of the past are articulated. Functioning as sites[16] through which memories are experienced and negotiated, places "support continuity of memory and history" for individuals and groups (Climo & Cattell 2002, 21). Besides the role of place for affirmation and transmitting of memory, however, I will pay particular attention on the aspects of contestation and claiming in the relationship between place and memory. Looking at remembering as dynamic social practice, I wish not to view memory as something "stored" in material locations, but as practice embedded in social relations that also involve places. Neither do I wish to view place as static and unchanging. Inspired by arguments by authors such as anthropologists Barbara Bender (2002) and Keith Basso (1996) and geographer Doreen Massey (1994; 2005), I will build on the idea that social interactions, including memory practices, shape places, and vice versa. I follow Massey's ideas (1994, 5) in that while places gain their particular meanings and identities as part of social relations, these meanings are never fixed but constantly in movement.[17]

Most research on place and memory from recent decades is more or less influenced by Pierre Nora's (1989) study on *lieux de mémoire* in the context of French national history and memory. Nora defines *lieux de mémoire* as places that are specifically devoted for remembering past events, in comparison to *milieux de mémoire* as places in which memory is being lived as a part of everyday life. *Lieux de mémoire* thus entail that the site reminds of something that has come to an end, or at least is not part of the contemporary social life of a community (*ibid*. 1, 6). Drawing partly from Nora, Young (1993) discusses Holocaust memorials, arguing that monuments and memorial sites of violent histories carry a risk of "storing" memory into monuments while detaching it from lived experience. I prefer to perceive this place of remembrance in a different way, its meanings being under ongoing negotiation in practices of remembrance. I argue that, in

[16] Drawing from Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire,* "site" refers here not exclusively to places but also to other possible channels through which memories can be shared and transmitted, such as stories, songs, performances and embodied habits (Nora 1989, 14; Climo & Cattell 2002, 17). However, in later references to Nora's concepts I will focus especially on the part of his analysis that concerns places and remembering.
[17] This view relates to Massey's (2005, 7, 9) wider conception of space as shaped along social relations and interactions, rather than as a static surface on which these interactions happen.

this context, place is deeply involved in negotiation and reformation of the understanding of the past. Basso (1996, 5) refers with *place-making* to how meaning of a place in the present is re-formed according to a new understanding of its past. Place-making is also about how people situate themselves in wider sets of relations they are part of, "as members of society and inhabitants of the earth" (*ibid*. 7). Besides expression and experiencing of shared memories and values, places provide space in which conflict and contest are manifested and acted out (Stewart and Strathern 2003, 3; Magnussen & Sinclair 2013, 16). An old residential school as a reminder of a previously silenced history of injustice, I find, cannot be separate from negotiation over the meaning of that history.

The first two of the following sections will focus on the meaning of preserving the history of the site as an old residential school: what the place means for survivors and their memory of the residential school, and why it is important to communicate that memory to other people. The last two sections will be about how the memory of the residential school is integrated into practices and lived experience on the site in the present; what kind of claims are set on the place due to its past, and how the memory of the school is continuously being experienced and negotiated in social interactions on the site.

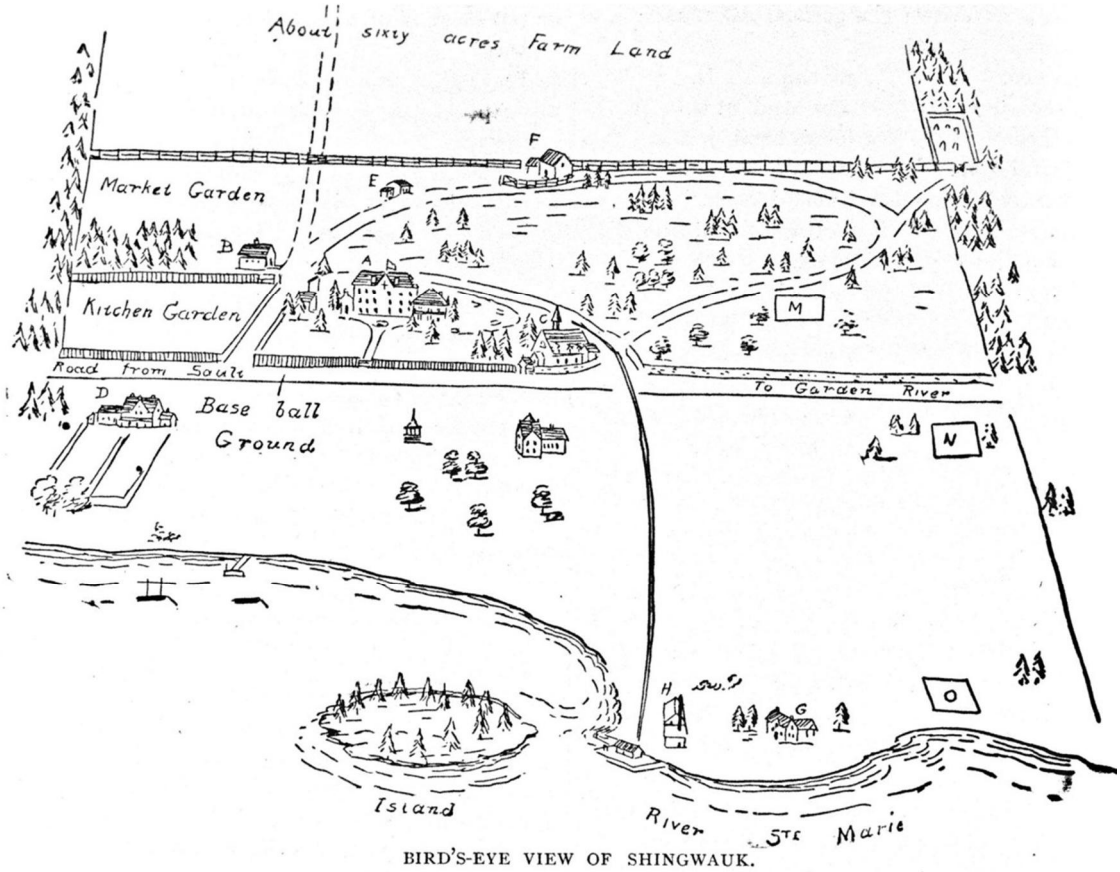

Figure 6. A Map of the Shingwauk site drawn by Principal E. F. Wilson., 1890. The school is the large building right from the gardens. Courtesy of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre.

Shingwauk site: a description

The site of the Shingwauk Residential School today makes up the campus area of Algoma University, the former residential school building functioning as its main building. Since the University moved on the site in 1971, the building has been extended with three additional wings. Other constructions on the site that date back to the time of the residential school are the chapel and the cemetery of the school, and the old principal's residence that today hosts Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig. Literarily meaning "Shingwauk University" in Anishnaabemowin (Ojibway language), this partner institution of Algoma University provides teaching in indigenous studies, focusing on Anishnaabe culture and language. In addition, the contemporary university campus has been complemented with two dormitories, another teaching building and a sports centre.

The facade of the old school building faces the street on which the campus is located, and is thereby most likely the first building to be seen when arriving at the site. From the outside, the original appearance of the building from the 1930s has been preserved whereas the interior has gone through various changes while turned from a residential school into a university. The architectural design of the building reflects a typical style of residential schools and other public institutions of the time of its construction (see Carr 2009). The gothic appearance of the building is powerfully impressive, and social hierarchies and divisions of the institution are reflected in the interior space. During the time of the residential school the space in the building was strictly divided according to the hierarchy between the staff and the students as well as to students' age and gender. Boys and girls were accommodated in different parts of the building and had separate entrances from the backyard, and younger and older students were accommodated in different floors. [18]

Of the interior space of the school building, the most well remained part is said to be the auditorium on the second floor. Having been the place for festivities and special events in the residential school, the big room with its stage is still used for special events by the university. I was told that many survivors have relatively positive memories about the auditorium, as that was the place where siblings were allowed to meet and talk with each other for a short moment once a month. Photos from previous Shingwauk Reunions and

[18] For more detailed analysis on architecture of residential school buildings as a manifestation of colonial policy and tool of social control, see Carr (2009) and Milosz (2015).

Gatherings are hanging on the walls of the corridor leading from the main entrance to the auditorium. During the time of the residential school, the same corridor was reserved for office spaces of the staff members. I was told by the staff members of the Centre that the main entrance is a "painful spot" for many former students because that was where the children were brought in and usually separated from their siblings when they came to the school for the first time. After that the children would enter the building from its backside, as the main entrance was reserved for the staff and special visitors. Taking stairs down to the ground floor of the building, one arrives at another rather infamous spot regularly introduced to visitors on guided tours: a small door under the stairwell, next to the old 'girls' entrance' to the backyard. The door used to lead into a small storage space which was used by residential school students for hiding from staff or meeting with their siblings or boy- or girlfriends, but also by the staff for punishment of students.

Walking from the old part of the main building towards the Centre located in a more recently added East Wing, the history of the place gets very visible. Photographs of the first students of the Shingwauk School are hanging on the walls of the corridor that leads from the entrance of the wing to the Centre, and the open space between classrooms at the end of the same corridor hosts the Project of Heart exhibition. The walls are covered with "letters for a survivor" written by students who have taken part in the project, each decorated with small tiles the participants have painted as a sign of respect for survivors or as a commemoration of a residential school student who never made it back home. In the centre of the space stands a piece of art created by Shirley H., a Shingwauk Alumni and now the chancellor of the University, representing phases of the history of Indigenous peoples from the time before colonization to the era of assimilation politics until today.

Outside the main building, in the middle of the front lawn between the street and the school, two stone memorials stand marking the history of the place. The older of the two, facing the street, commemorates the first principal of the school, E. F. Wilson, and was established in 1935 when a new school building was opened. The memorial is built out of stones taken from the ruins of the first Shingwauk Home and located at where it used to stand from 1874 to 1935. The second memorial was established on the initiative of the CSAA in 2012, and is dedicated to all children who went to residential schools; especially to those who never made it back home. This memorial has been set up on the backside of the first memorial, thus facing the school building.

Looking from the memorials towards the street, one can see the oldest remaining building on the site in the left-hand corner of the front lawn. Bishop Fauquier Memorial Chapel, named after the first Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Algoma, was built in 1883 for the use of the residential school. The chapel was built almost completely by students of the school under supervision of one adult staff member: a rather shocking detail always mentioned on the guided tours of the Centre. According to some of the survivors I interviewed and to what I heard from the staff of the Centre, the services held in the chapel used to provide students with some relief from the daily routines of the school. On the other hand, some of them also associated the chapel with imposing of Christian religion on children. In front of the chapel stands a sign designating the status of the school property as a provincially recognized heritage site. In addition to some details concerning the buildings, it summarizes the history of the site in rather neutralized words: "Under this Anglican missionary's tutelage the institution, named after the well-known Ojibway Chief Augustine Shingwauk (Little Pine), provided Indian children with religious instruction, occupational training and homemaking skills."

At the edge of the woods, a few steps back from the chapel towards the school building, stands the principal's house now turned into an indigenous faculty. Past the house and the Arbor, a wooden shelter with a fire place, reserved for indigenous ceremonies, one can follow a path to the old cemetery of the residential school, hidden from sight in the woods at the edge of the campus area. As the school was inhabited practically all year around, there were many students and staff members during the years that passed away in the school. Especially in the earlier times of its operation, the poor physical conditions of the school building intensified spreading of infectious diseases. Facilities for health care were modest, and also poor nourishment combined with hard work had its effect on the health of the students (Auger 2005, 152). According to what I heard from the staff of the Centre, there are approximately 120 graves in the cemetery and its surroundings. Most of the stone markers still remaining mark the graves of staff members; student's graves were usually marked with wooden crosses that have rotten through the years. In the first Reunion in 1981, the deteriorated condition of the cemetery caught the attention of survivors. As a result, a committee was appointed to take care of the cemetery and a memorial cairn established to commemorate all those buried there. The committee organized a research in 1980s in order to identify the unmarked graves. The names of the buried discovered through the research were inscribed in a memorial book that was placed

in the chapel. More recently, a memorial bench has been brought to the cemetery by the Indigenous student's association, painted with the words "In Memory of Shingwauk Residential School – Students Remembering Students".

5.1 Memory experienced through place: survivors

While having a second interview with Mike, this time at the Centre where he was visiting also for other business, I asked about how he finds coming to the school site nowadays. Laughing, he commented that it was funny that I came to ask that as that was what he had just been thinking about while walking into the building:

> You know, when you go back and look back at that (…) I guess it's very similar to when the soldiers went over to Europe – when they go back and look at the land where they had battles (…) you know, look back at that and everything's changed so much that it's hard to visualize that because the landscapes change, so the only thing you remember is the emotions (…) and that's how you associate with it – you can't visualize it (…) so the only thing left of your memories here are your emotions of what happened (…) that little boy who was there, he has never escaped, he's still in that environment in some sense – he'll be there till I die, you know – people are like that.

Mike's thoughts quoted here illustrate how places are intertwined in remembering by supporting people's ability to connect with the past (Climo & Cattell 2003, 21, Bender 2002, 103). Stewart and Strathern (2003, 7) point recollection and commemoration as examples of contexts in which landscape and place encounter emotions. Landscapes here are to be understood as a socially and culturally formed "settings that frame people's sense of place and community". Stewart and Strathern term the impression of a landscape that emerges from the combination of the "perceived experience" of the landscape and meanings and values attached to it as "inner landscape of the mind" (*ibid*. 3, 8). In Mike's example, visiting the school evokes re-experiencing of memories attached to the place, and the immediate experience of the place is shaped by those memories. In this section I discuss the Shingwauk site as a place of memory as it was represented by the survivors; as a space carrying personal memories of their time in the school as well as the location of their shared experience as residential school students, and thereby a connecting space for a shared memory. I argue that the site has had its part in shaping the shared understanding of the experience of residential schooling among the survivors and their descendants, and that it has equally been shaped by that process.

Not surprisingly, the site appeared as an important place of personal remembrance for many of the survivors I interviewed. As many of them had spent a considerable part of their childhood and youth in the school, some of them also described it as their home. The experience of my interviewees showed a wide variation of personal meanings attached to the school site. Some of them brought up negative experiences such as bullying, abuse or loneliness experienced in the school. I was let to understand that the school is still a traumatic space to many. Even though the survivors I talked with had regularly returned to their old school and found it important to preserve its memory, they also told about others who still would not set their foot on the site: a brother who had turned away from the doorstep on a way to a reunion, and former school mates who would not come to reunions at all. In fact, several old residential schools have been demolished on the request of survivors. It is a complicated matter how places invested with such controversial memories could be dealt with in a way that would please everyone; while some survivors and indigenous communities stress the value of old residential schools as important reminders of the history of the system, others find them disturbing as sites of painful memories.[19] In the accounts of my interviewees, however, the significance of the place as a reminder of a history of injustice and in some cases of painful personal experiences was often intertwined with an emotional bond to the site and a will to preserve it.

Susie's brother passed away in the school and is buried in the cemetery. Viewing the old school as an important carrier of the survivors' experience and a source of learning because of rather than despite its difficult memories to many, she stressed this special bond of herself to the site: "I feel like a part of my family is still here". Shirley R., in turn, still avoids certain spaces on the site due to discomforting memories. However, while talking in the interview about how the idea of founding the CSAA developed through the first reunions, she also brought up the importance of the site as the location of residential school experience – hers as well as other survivors:

> There were some, mind you, that still wouldn't come back here – you know, they wouldn't – but there was a lot of us that came, and I was at that group then – I think it was Mike and Shirley and Irene (…) and they asked, well, what they thought of forming, like, Children of Shingwauk. Just to keep our home – more

[19] The neglected role of old residential school buildings as reminders of the history of the schools was brought up in public by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NRCT) in 2017. See e.g. CBC interview with the director of the NCTR Ry Moran: http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/indigenous-residential-schools-sites-ry-moran-1.4306944

> or less – our experience of being raised here – you know, it wasn't just certain years, that's all of the years, eh—

Referring back to the discussion on forming the community of survivors of the Shingwauk School and reframing the school experience, Shirley's recollections here hint to the role of the old school site in the process. Kenny (1999, 434) points to the role of old schools in the process of forming a shared, "interpretive frame" among survivors of their experience, as concrete places "where memory can be attached". Not only their old school, this place is also where the Alumni have come together to maintain their community since the first Reunion in 1981. Many of the interviewees referred to the site as a location of their shared experience of residential schooling, like Shirley, quoted above, and Irene who was describing her attachment to the place through social relationships dating back to her school times:

> I personally cherish the Shingwauk site because this was my home for 3 and-a-half years and I made a lot of friends there during my time at Shingwauk. Most of these friends are still my friends today – we were just teenagers, and now we're all on our 70s and still going strong. Today our friendship is still strong and active – and during my time at Shingwauk, these friends that I had there were my family because I did not see my family for 10 months of a year – and I only saw my family for the months of July and August each year.

In chapter 4 I represented thoughts of the survivors on how the first reunions brought them together as a community and gave them space to set their school experience in a broader context. Reunions and forming the Alumni community have apparently reshaped not only former students' relations to each other and their school experience but also to the place itself. As with the school experience, the formation of a shared understanding of what residential schools were for has also affected the former students' perceptions of the place. Susie, when being asked in the interview about the meaning of the site to her today, described how her understanding of her experience of it has developed: "Well I feel like it's home, such as it is – I mean, I lived here for 12 years, came as a child, 4 and-a-half. So I tell my people I'm speaking to that when your childhood becomes a certain way you learn to live that way. ---" Describing how, as a child, one did just learn to survive with the circumstances, she then continued about how her perception has changed since the first reunion in 1981:

> —So when I come to this site, I look at it, and it's the place where I used to live, and I've learnt since then, and all those years since 1981 – that's when my learning started – I learnt what kind of life we lived and I learnt about everything that we missed out on, but I don't dwell on that, you know, I just know that, I believe we have to fight—

She described it as a personal, ongoing mission for herself to be aware of "what happened in this building" in order to make things better for future, and the place as an important source for that learning: "You know, I even know more things that went on here than what I knew when I lived here."

In addition to such personal memories, the place has become associated with meanings attached to residential schooling and survivor experience on a broader scale. The meanings attached to the place are thus dynamic and subject to change, shaped in social relations and not separate from surrounding negotiations and conflicts on history and memory (see e.g. Bender 2002, 104; Strathern & Stewart 2003, 11). How the former students of the Shingwauk School share and negotiate the memory of their experience and how the broader historical significance of residential schools is negotiated in the society shape the old school site as a social space. Although the meanings attached to the place by survivors have been subject to change, it can also be viewed to provide a concrete basis for the shared memory of their school experience and a means for transmitting that memory to other people. It appears to be not only survivors of Shingwauk School but also their descendants to whom the site has a special meaning. The Centre is – according to the staff members as well as my own observations – visited regularly by children and grandchildren of former residential school students who wish to find information about their family member. Jay, Susie's son, described that the site is personally meaningful to him in terms of understanding his family background and the experience of his mother and other survivors:

> —Just the building itself does that for me, I mean I'll come up here and I see it and I'll stop and it'll make me think of what happened here and how long it happened here and… I picture my mom and her pictures she's shown of others and then I think, you know, I always go back to the cemetery and I'll go to, Uncle Leo's, where we think he is buried, you know, so I always do those rituals that – I try to imagine what it would've been like to be here and go through all that stuff – and that way, I think you are more cognizant of what your parents went through and what your grandparents went through, so it does, it brings up stuff that, I believe, everybody needs to be aware of.

The concrete spaces in which to locate the events that his mother has told about thus help Jay to get a livelier sense of the life in residential school that he has been hearing about, and supports in forming an understanding of the institution as a whole. The place works for ensuring the continuity of memory (Climo & Cattell 2002, 21) by supporting its intergenerational transmission. Bloch (1998, 109) discusses original sites of past events as non-verbal contexts in which "the past is evoked", describing how the local memory

of the anticolonial rebellion of 1947 in Madagascar is passed on in a particular family through visits to the sites in which the related events took place. He suggests that with the help of imagining, such "evocations of the past" situated in its original surroundings can transmit the memory to those who have not experienced it first-hand, helping them to adopt it as "their" memory (*ibid*. 120–121). In his study of place-names of the Western Apache, Basso (1996, 34) observes that as knowledge is intergenerationally transmitted in places, it is also through the awareness of those places and the knowledge attached to them that the self can be posited in relation to "larger schemes of things". In this context, this could mean a connection between the experience of being on the site, intergenerational memory of the family, and the larger historical context.

Bloch (1998, 121) argues that, in interplay of the environment and imagining, the past can be experienced more deeply in the present in occasions of remembrance situated on the original sites of the events than through mere verbal retellings. Don emphasized this special value the site has brought to the history-documenting work of the Shingwauk Project and the CSAA, in comparison to collection of oral testimonies and historical records by the TRC. According to him, this is also important to survivors of other schools:

> We've had, I'd say, a richer, a more intact history. Because of the site. People can come here. Many of these buildings have been bulldozed, you know, they're gone. So many of the people whose schools are gone, they came here. Because it was the same thing, so they come here.

What is illustrated here is the affirmative value of the school site as it connects to the wider history; marking the past of not only Shingwauk Residential School but the whole system, it carries similar value also to survivors of other residential schools and their descendants. Taking into account that it has been within relatively short time that residential schools have become "officially" recognized as an oppressive institution, tangible evidence has been important in supporting survivors' claims on the significance of their experience (Kenny 1999, 436). Old school buildings and sites can be viewed as something tangible that in permanence of their material form work for affirming memory of residential schooling (Carr 2009, 112). As Don's observations illustrates, what is important here is an understanding of residential schools as a historically situated, common experience that can be equally marked by any old school building still standing. The meanings of the Shingwauk site described to me by survivors give an impression of a combination of personal attachment – in good and bad – and value given to the place as a concrete affirmation of their experience in residential schools. Besides providing a

means of passing the memory of their experience to others (Bloch 1998, 120), the site functions as a tangible link between that experience and its historical context, providing basis for truth claims on the history of the schools (Climo & Cattell 2002, 18). I will now move on to discuss in more detail the values given to Shingwauk site – and old residential schools in general – as public markers of the history of the institution.

5.2 Making visible what used to be hidden: a material trace of a history of injustice

In this section I will discuss the school site as a reminder of the IRS system as a whole, in relation to wider questions of why sites of difficult history are being preserved and turned into public memorial sites. Discussing places that mark histories of violence and oppression, cultural heritage scholars Logan and Reeves (2009, 3) observe a trend of increasing public interest towards such "places with difficult heritage" as sites of war, genocide or confinement. They distinguish between places that are generally recognized as sites of past violence – such as Nazi concentration camps – and to others where the past is subject to diverging interpretations that might evoke collective shame or division among the community. While the significance of the former kind of sites is shared, that of the latter is subject to contestation (*ibid*. 5). As the significance of residential schools and is still to some extent debated within Canadian public sphere, I would count the Shingwauk site in the latter category. Unlike, for example, in the case of Nazi concentration camps, the schools do not belong to some past oppressive regime but are part of the history of how the contemporary Canadian society has developed into what it is now. Regarding that the history of residential schools as well as indigenous perspectives in general have been long excluded from the official history narratives, there is a great need to have that history and those experiences publicly recognized and validated (see e.g. Campbell 2014, 144; Niezen 2013, 77). Carr (2009, 112) argues that old residential school buildings should be recognized as a crucial part of the "truth-telling process" concerning the history of the system, noting that the fate of the remaining buildings has been notably absent from the IRS settlement process and the government initiatives for commemoration (*ibid*. 126). Here I will perceive the Shingwauk site within these frames, discussing how the site as a material trace of the residential school supports truth claims on its history.

To what extent the history of the Shingwauk site as a residential school has been made visible and knowledgeable to those who do not have a personal history with the school

has, according to the early actives of the Shingwauk Project and the CSAA, changed drastically from the early years following the closure of the school in the 1970s. According to Don, when he first arrived on the site as a young teacher of the University in the 1970s, the past of the place appeared to be unknown to most people working there. In an interview he was recollecting his first visit to the site, having been shown around by a friend who was working at the University:

> There was only this building, and some portables, and the wing that the Centre is in, and of course the chapel. And when I came down Shannon – the street over here – and I saw the school, I felt like that there was, like this was not expected, like it was very different, it was a new college – and when we turned into the drive way and I looked to, you know, it seemed old. And I thought "oh, this is interesting" – but I didn't know anything about it – because in a city of this size, a small city, having an old building like this would be really unusual, you'd need it for a purpose. (…) So I came, and he showed me around and I asked about it but nobody seemed to know much, right? One person said it was an Indian orphanage. But really nobody knew anything.

Today the situation is strikingly different; the past is "inscribed" in the space in the form of not only the original school building but of the memorials, plaques and exhibitions. Most of the survivors I interviewed agreed that, in addition to personal importance, the site carries very strong significance as a concrete reminder of the residential school system. That is why, according to them, the history of the place should be known to everyone being involved with the site today, and its potential for raising public awareness about residential schools should not be wasted. Irene, having been involved in the work of the CSAA from the very beginning, described how making the history more visible on the site has been part of the survivors' process of coming to terms with their experience:

> —So it's still gonna be there as it is, for that purpose – that site is being used for educational purposes for all Canadians and international people. Because the survivors had realized that something really bad had happened to them while they were in residential school (…) so that's why it's there today as you see it. Now I think that's a very important heritage site, the Shingwauk, because it's the truth that is there for what happened to the students that went there.

Here Irene associates the value of the site with it being a concrete proof for other people about "what happened in residential schools". Kenny (1999, 436) points that the symbolic value residential schools in general have gained as manifestations of cultural genocide towards indigenous peoples has a lot to do with the concreteness of the institution, the schools being "something tangible --- one can point to and say 'it happened there!'". In addition to providing survivors with an affirmation of their experience, the old schools as

material traces of the institution can be regarded as public evidence of residential schools as a historical event, backing up survivors' accounts of what happened in the schools. Young (1993, 120) writes about the power of the ruins of Nazi concentration camps in Poland as original "sites of destruction", arguing that as memorial sites they are "devastating in their impact for they compel the visitor to accept the horrible fact that what they show is real". Comparing Auschwitz and Majdanek camps with memorials located away from where the events they refer to took place, Young suggests that these ruins as original traces of the camps "collapse the distinction between themselves and what they evoke". In other words, the ruins come to be seen as not only references to the events they represent but as parts of the events themselves (*ibid*.121). The Shingwauk site equally gains a special position in that sense, being the original, physical location of the institution it refers to. Particular elements of it in themselves can be regarded as documentation of the history; the cemetery, for example, illustrates the fact that children did die in the residential school in considerable numbers. As a material link to the past events, place thereby gains authority as historical evidence and place of memory. This was recognized as an important reason to preserve the site with its buildings by some of the Alumni, like Irene, and Susie, who, in the interview, recalled an incident of misunderstanding concerning the chapel:

> We had a group go in and they wanted to start taking it apart – and when we called them on it, the former students, 'what are you doing to the church', their response was 'oh, we thought you'd want to take it down because of all—'They weren't dismantling the roof or anything, just the interior – 'we thought you'd want take it down because it's just bad memories'. It isn't just bad memories, it's a teaching tool, it's a lot of other things that have gone on, you know, my brother was buried out of that church – and I'm not a sentimentalist in that sense, but that's the place where people ought to remember things, false religion was taught in that church, people ought to know that.

As the place as a material trace supports the truth claim on what happened in the school, the way its past is attached to injustice and personal mourning becomes a reason to remember instead of to forget. As "something concrete to point at" (Kenny 1999, 436), the evidence value of the site as a teaching tool is also at work on the guided tours of the Centre. Standing with a group in front of the school's main entrance, Krista or Sandra would often point at certain parts of the building while explaining about the hierarchies of the school manifested in its architecture, for example: "students were not allowed to use that entrance". A tiny storage door under the stairwell on the old girls' side of the building had been purposefully preserved on the request of survivors, to whom it stood

for very controversial memories. In addition to providing a place for hiding from the staff of the residential school, it was also a place where a child might be locked up as a punishment for example for having been caught speaking her or his native language. Why this particular detail has been preserved, I was told, is to remind what happened in this very building during its operation as a residential school. Such spaces are, then, hoped to evoke recognition of what happened there as wrong, and understanding of why the past they remind of should be remembered. As material reminders of forced assimilation, they refer not only residential schools in themselves but to the colonial ideologies the whole system was based on.[20]

Figure 7. Photo by the author.

Young (1993, 127), however, actually criticizes the way material traces are given even too much authority both as carriers of memory and as factual evidence of the past. By mistaking a material "fragment" of an event as embodying the whole event itself, people skip their responsibility of actively remembering and reflecting on the event in all its complexity: "Memory work becomes unnecessary as long as the material fragment of events continues to function as a witness-memorial". Furthermore, Young argues that giving material traces an unquestionable value as evidence risks fixing them into a certain version of the past. What follows is that they lose their significance for active remembering, becoming subject to "claims of material evidence and proof" instead (*ibid*. 127). Although recognizing the risk of attaching fixed meanings to objects and places of memory at the expense of multiple interpretations, I cannot completely agree with Young about them as remaining separate from active remembering. I would rather view these "material fragments" as part of the memory work, intertwined in social practices of remembrance around them and gaining constantly changing and multiple meanings within those practices. How the Shingwauk site has come to mark the history of residential schools has been through a long and still ongoing process of negotiating the significance of its past. In order to set their "claims of material evidence" on the site, a shared understanding of the site must have been formed among survivors. That understanding and the actions stemmed from it have also shaped the place in practice.

[20] For comparison, see for example Batten (2009, 86) on local memorialization of colonial violence in Australia, and Young (1993, 120) on ruins of Nazi concentration camps as memorials of the Holocaust.

Figure 8. Photo by the author.

As a site reminding of the history of colonization, this old residential school can be set in a larger context of how such sites are involved in processes of redefining the meaning of that history. Elsewhere in Canada, for example, some statues commemorating important figures of colonial history are being replaced and streets carrying the title of "Colonization Road" renamed (see e.g. CTV News 21 June 2017; Cecco 2018). The way the negotiation of significance of the Shingwauk site has shaped it concretely is well illustrated by the setting of the two memorials on the front lawn. The newer memorial, established by the CSAA, has been set up on the backside of the first memorial that commemorates Principal Wilson, thus facing the school building. The meaning of the memorial is explained in the plaque in the middle of it as following:

> In keeping with the spirit and intent embodied within the Shingwauk site, the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, Shingwauk Education Trust, and Algoma University herby designate these lands and the cemetery as National Memorial to all those who attended one or more of the many Residential Schools across Turtle Island. We hold a special place in our hearts for those children who never returned home. May their memories live on.

The plaque is accompanied with the Teachings of Seven Grandfathers[21], seven guiding principles for life in Anishnaabe culture, inscribed in the memorial. During the tours the staff of the Centre used to mention that the Alumni had thought it especially important to have those teachings there in Ojibway language facing the building because of what was taken away by the school in terms of culture and language. These memorials, I find, demonstrate the multiple layers of commemoration that are at play on the site. While the older memorial can be regarded as commemorating the school as an accomplishment of providing indigenous children with access to education, the newer one marks the darker side of the history by referring to "children who never returned home" and culture that was taken away. In that sense, it can be regarded as a counter memorial to the narrative of a benevolent education policy the older one represents. This way, it functions not only for commemoration of the former students but as a

Figure 9. Photo by the author.

[21] *Nbwaakaawin* - Wisdom; *Zaagiowin* - Love; *Aakdhewin* - Bravery; *Mnaadenmowin* - Respect; *Gwekwadziwin* - Honesty; *Dbaadendizin* - Humility; *Debwewin* - Truth

critical reminder of the less flattering aspects of the history of the country (see Young 1993, 34; Logan & Reeves 2009, 1).

Moreover, the new memorial challenges the original hierarchy of the system by showing residential school students as historical subjects, proudly facing the school with words of a language and a culture it sought to suppress. Irene, while sharing her thoughts about the site, expressed her pride of the work of the Alumni that is manifested in its current state:

> I am proud of the fact that CSAA made this site a heritage site as it is today because all the work of the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association on the site for many years – it was 35 years, that's how long it took to get what you see today. And it was all done by survivors as volunteers, and we are very proud of the many activities that we did on the site for many many years – at the request of the former students and survivors.

The site has thus not gained its meaning as a memorial site of the residential school solely through its material continuity, but through active work of the people who remember it that way; the Shingwauk Alumni (see Young 1993, 119). This is why I argue that, if perceived as a memorial site, the Shingwauk site symbolizes not only the history of the place as residential school but also the process of survivors actively engaging with and reclaiming their history. Having once been the ones who the system the school represented sought to control, they have now become the ones taking control on the place. In the following section I will focus in more detail on this aspect of reclaiming.

5.3 Reclaiming the past and the place: why control over the Shingwauk site matters

Here I will move on to the ways the past of the school keeps shaping the place and social relations around it in the present. In this section I will discuss how the present meanings of the place are being articulated, focusing especially on claims set on the site concerning its purpose and the control over what happens with the site. In addition to purpose of cross-cultural education drawn from Shingwauk's vision, another aspect of such claims that appear to be held by the Alumni as well as by the rest of my interviewees is the obligation tied to the site to compensate for the loss of indigenous cultures and languages due to their suppression in the residential school. Survivors, who were subjected to such attempts of suppression in the school, are consequently regarded as bearing special authority in having their say on what happens with the place in the present and future. Here I will perceive these local questions of control over place in the wider context of indigenous peoples reclaiming their history and space.

The history of the control and ownership of the site has been very complex since the residential school closed in 1970. The Algoma University College moved to the site in 1971. At the beginning the University shared the building with Keewatinung Institute, an Indigenous organization whose work was focused on preservation and revitalization of indigenous culture and traditions and on "maintaining a sense of native education" on the site (Shingwauk Project 1980, 38). However, the Institute was evicted from the site in 1975, which caused an outrage among local First Nations communities. The Anglican Church sold part of the site to the University, which was planning to sell it further. This led to tensions between the different parties managing the site and eventually to a court case between the Anglican Diocese of Algoma and the local Garden River First Nation. It turned out that the University was not entitled to sell the land, as the Diocese had not originally been entitled to sell it to the University (Shingwauk Project 1992, 26, 29). The first Shingwauk Reunion of former students in 1981 was not separate from the ongoing conflict described above. Mike, who was involved in the first Reunion, explained how the initiative was related not only to the idea of bringing former students together to share experiences, but also to the conflict around the control of the site:

> What we wanted to do was to make a statement – a political and a legal statement – about whom the land and the site was for – so we went and met with an Elder from Garden River and he said "Well, bring people back together and they'll know what to do" – and that's how all the students came in".

While the Alumni are today working collaboratively with the University in developing the site in order to take its history into account in the operations taking place there today, I was let to understand that reaching the process has been challenging. For the Alumni, their special entitlement to the place appears to be well maintained until this day. Several of them underlined that the site as a former residential school needs to be preserved as a memorial and evidence of the school and their experience in it, to be employed especially for educational use. How the history is visible on the site today is based on the wishes, as well as concrete actions, of survivors. Survivors have a position in the administration of the University through representatives of the CSAA in the Board of Governors, and through joint management of the archival collections. The importance of this position to influence on what happens on the site was brought up in the interviews, for example by Irene who pointed that "the survivors were the ones that pushed the Algoma to make that University a cross-cultural training university". When I met Shirley H. for the first time, she explained how improvement of that cross-cultural aspect is still ongoing, referring to

a current initiative of increasing indigenous content in the programs of the University. She brought up that in her view the site is as a former residential school is meant for creating awareness and understanding about residential schools and ongoing legacy of colonialism, and that the wishes of the CSAA and the local indigenous communities should be respected on part of the University.

Figure 10. The principal's residence, contemporary Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig. Photo by the author.

A strong view appeared to be shared among my interviewees that the past of the Shingwauk site should guide the life of the place in the present. Here the shared memory involves a moral claim that concerns not only the past but also its significance for the present circumstances (Lambek 1996, 248). Many of the interviewees expressed the idea that there exists a particular responsibility permanently attached to the site due to its past. The idea that the school should "put back what it took away" was originally expressed by a local, indigenous Elder Dan Pine, a descendant of Chief Shingwauk, when he was consulted by the founders of the Shingwauk Project in the early 1980s about what should be done with the site. This phrase appeared to me as being widely used in common speech of the people involved with the Centre and the Alumni. Practically this means that the residential school took away the children's language and culture, so what is being reclaimed on the site today is not only the physical space itself and its history, but also the indigenous culture lost there. The old principal's residence, now functioning as an institution of indigenous studies, provides a perfect example here. When commenting on the building during the guided tours, the staff of the Centre would often literarily refer to the principal's house as an example of the indigenous people "reclaiming space" on the site: as a place in which the original power position is being "turned upside down". Krista expressed her view on the importance of the practice of indigenous and cross-cultural education on the site as following:

> I think it's really significant that that is starting to happen on this site because so much of that culture, that language, that identity was taken away in this building – that for it to be coming back to this building is really significant, they're trying to put back what was taken away at some point. And I think it's important just acknowledge where this building came from and not take it for granted or kind of try to hide that part of our history.

The history of the site thus plays a crucial part in defining its present and future purposes. According to Lambek (1996, 248), "remembering comprises contextually situated

assertions of continuity on the part of subjects and claims about the significance of the past experience". Remembering is never just about recalling a neutralized image of the past, but also about moral evaluation of it and of the social relationships involved (*ibid* 248). Places, as tangible contexts for remembering that are experienced meaningful through memories related to them, equally function as sites of moral claims (Climo & Cattell, 18). Significance of survivors' residential school experience is partly articulated in relation to the place which, being a physical trace of the residential school, works for "backing up" the claims on the significance of that experience. According to Basso (1996, 74), members of a community talking about a place or landscape and their encounters with other in it involves moral evaluation of those encounters. Giving meanings to places is thereby both about defining the significance of "what happened here" and moral aspect of contemporary interactions in those places (*ibid.* 5, 74). Here moral claims on the purpose of the site are being drawn from the past injustice having taken place there: the colonial policy of forced assimilation imposed on children through residential schooling, and the impacts of the schools on former students and their communities. I also argue that the broader negotiation about the historical meaning of residential schools significantly impacts on what kind of claims on the Shingwauk site are seen as legitimate (see Connerton 2011, 3; Kenny 1999). That is, the extent to which residential schools are recognized as an institution of colonial structural violence shapes the legitimacy of survivors' claims on the site on the grounds of the injustice experienced through residential schooling.

This again contradicts with Young's (1993, 127) arguments that attaching our memories to material sites makes them detached from our daily life and thereby frees us from the responsibility to remember. In this context, it appears to be especially the place from which the responsibility to remember draws its legitimation and continuity. The responsibility for compensating and addressing the impacts of the residential school is extended to its physical location, and to people "inhabiting" it today via their relation to the place. Due to a bond of continuity operating through the space, the institutions currently working on the site are being held responsible for contributing to "giving back what was taken away". The history of the Shingwauk School represents a wider history of the IRS system as a whole, which by now has been publicly recognized as an element of the policies of assimilation attacking on culture and self-determination of indigenous people. Thereby "to put back what was taken away" gains meaning not only as

compensating for the impacts of the Shingwauk School on its students, but as addressing the legacy of colonization on broader scale. This is why "taking the history into account" in the contemporary operations on the site means not only respecting the wishes of Shingwauk survivors but indigenous presence on the site in a broader sense. What partly legitimates these claims appears to be the idea of continuity embodied in the place, which can also be pointed out in the quote of the elder Dan Pine: "The Shingwauk School never closed". Instead of cutting the ties to the history of the residential school when turning the site into a university, these both institutions are being situated as parts of the same process framed with the narrative of Shingwauk's vision. In the interview, Don talked about the beginnings of the Shingwauk Project, and about how hearing about the founding history of the school had impacted his view of the situation of the time. Stating that "The Shingwauk Project didn't begin in the 1970s. The Shingwauk Project begun in the 1830s", he connected the project as well as the role of the University within a long-term struggle for maintaining indigenous self-determination:

> When I heard that story I thought that this is what this school needs to do – because it's a formal residential school –it has to be part of that solution, it has to accept that responsibility. (…) In my view, if you don't accept it this will not work, you cannot have a school here. There's just too much history that you will have to suppress and deny.

These kinds of arguments connect the history of residential schools within the same continuum with the present, instead of situating the schools in the past of which the present is clearly separated. I find that such assertions of continuity challenge what Campbell (2014, 144) terms "demands for closure on the past": acts of framing residential schools and survivors' experiences of them as something to "get over with", and responsibilities for what happened in the schools detached from present actors and institutions. The continuity manifested in and "backed up" by material traces such as this particular school site works for validating claims for responsibility drawn from the history of the schools. These claims on continuity are today also inscribed in the space on the site, for example in form of the CSAA memorial. Such visible markers of indigenous presence and control on the site manifest the reframing of the history of the school from the narrative of oppression to that of resistance and reclaiming, and point to the responsibility for addressing the legacy of the school. In the final section of this chapter I will connect this discussion of continuity with that of the role of places of memory for everyday life, arguing against the concerns raised by Young (1993) and Nora (1989) about the detachment of memory from lived experience into material sites of memory.

5.4 A place of living memory

During the presentations at the Centre about the history of the place and of residential schools in Canada, Krista or Sandra would usually show some old pictures of the site from the early times of the residential school for the visitors to compare with its present appearance. One time, during a presentation given to a group of adult students, someone from the group came to ask whether the place is "more like a museum site". Krista explained that although they are working on the visibility of the history on the site and getting a better signage there, it is still a fully-functioning university. The discussion continued after the tour, when someone else asked if there have ever been plans to demolish the old school. Telling that not as far as she knew, Krista added that the site is important especially for the reason that it is, unlike many other old residential schools, still a functioning place open to public where people can come in.

In this last part of the chapter I wish to deepen the discussion on Shingwauk site as a place of "living memory", in relation to analysis of memorial sites by Nora (1989) and Young (1993) and by drawing from the discussions in the earlier sections. According to Nora's (1989, 6) definition, *lieux de mémoire* are a sign of detachment of memory from the lived experience; people need sites of memory because memory is no longer an intimate part of their everyday life. According to my own interpretation, however, the aim of the organizations that have been working on the visibility and influence of the memory of Shingwauk Residential School is exactly to make that memory a recognized part of the everyday life and practices taking place on the site today. It could, indeed, be said that the whole Shingwauk site today functions as a memorial for residential schools. I would not, however, view it as a mere physical memorial "carrying the memory burden for the people" (see Young 1993, 127) but as a space and an inspiration for that memory work to be continued. Magdalena Milosz (2015, 182) discusses the Shingwauk site in Nora's terms in her master's thesis, arguing that it involves features of both *lieux de mémoire* and *milieux de mémoire.* According to her, even though distant to many people working or studying on the site today, the past of the place is integrated in the present of the site through setting both within the same frame of continuity based on the school's founding history and the Shingwauk's vision (*ibid*. 214, 219). I agree with Milosz, finding that Shingwauk site falls somewhere in between these categories. The operation of the Shingwauk Residential School has, indeed, ended, but the past of the site plays a central role in practices and interactions on it today. Moreover, I argue, through framing the

present and future purpose of the site with Shingwauk's vision and claims of survivors to keep the memory of the school alive, what the site embodies is a call for responsibility and active remembering instead of "externalization" of the responsibility to remember.

I want to underline that in the context of practices of remembrance and memorialization around the Shingwauk School, in contrast to the sites of memory in Nora's terms, this so-called memorialization of a former residential school site has started from the local level. Whereas Nora and Young discuss for the most part "official" memory sites established by states, in the Shingwauk context the direction has been from the grass root level towards official recognition of the history of the site. This also adds to the multiple significances attached to the site; rather than just a place with a difficult past, it has also been and continues to be a site of activism and reclaiming. The work towards making the site a publicly recognized memorial of residential schools has all stemmed from what, I argue, could be called living memory: the experiences of the residential school survivors and their descendants, and the shared sense within the Shingwauk Project and the Alumni about the enduring purpose of the site. As Irene stated in her interview, the work of the Alumni on the site has been part of their process of coming to terms with the past. However, the question that appeared to be of concern for the actives of the CSAA and for staff members and others actively involved with the Centre is how to maintain this significance and links to everyday life for future generations and wider public. The work of raising local awareness of the history of the place is still ongoing, as well as the negotiation of what the past of the place should mean for the present and future. This negotiation takes place in interactions among different parties of interest – the Shingwauk Alumni, the University, and local First Nation communities – concerning such practical issues as the management and funding of the Centre and integration of indigenous content in study programs. The principle of cross-cultural education drawing from Shingwauk's vision being nowadays integrated in the operation of the University and the indigenous faculty operating in the old principal's residence, the past of place can be said to be present in everyday life of the site not only in the form of memorials and old buildings.

What also needs to be remembered when drawing from Young's ideas on "delegating memory work" to material memorials is that Young discusses mainly memorials erected or preserved primarily for the purpose of commemoration. The Shingwauk site, in turn, was employed into a new use as a university right after the closure of the residential school. That is, it is not a memorial site physically separate from daily life of a community

it is located in, but a space where that daily life is taking place. As Young observes, such ruins of violent history obviously have a different meaning for people who come there especially in purpose of remembrance compared to those for whom the place is part of their everyday environment (*ibid*. 144). The fact that it matters to survivors and their descendants what is being done with the site illustrates that it is more than a monument detached from present experience to them. It is obvious, however, that there are many people working, studying, or even living on the old Shingwauk site today to whom the place is something else than an old residential school in the first place, in most cases a university. Rather than decreasing the significance of the place as an old residential school, I would view the latter as illustrating how meanings and memories attached to a place are in continuous state of change and interplay (Massey 1994, 5). Places are also intertwined in multiple histories and sets of relations, and thereby come attached with multiple meanings and memories (Milosz 2015, 219; Bender 2002, 107). In addition, the fact that the place is employed in new use entails that it is intertwined in everyday lives of people in a different way than if it was exclusively a memorial site. The negotiation over the memory of the place is embedded in the daily operations of the University now functioning on the site.

Figure 11. Photo by the author.

I have discussed here how the place of the old residential school is tightly integrated as a part of the work of remembering, from reminding of a history of injustice to negotiation of the significance of that injustice for the present. The latter includes negotiation of responsibility for the past, and thereby setting of claims on the place that point at obligations to participate in addressing the legacy of residential schools and the wider colonial policies they were part of. The local examples of such negotiation introduced in this chapter can be linked to a broader challenge of integrating residential schools into shared memory of the society. In the next chapter I am going to focus on another context in which this challenge is reflected and being addressed in practices on the site today: the educational activities of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre and the Alumni.

6 Passing on the story: education on residential schools as a practice of remembrance

"My own thought is that I'm trying to get them to understand that what went on here was very, very wrong – what went on here was very contrary to what they believe, their parents believe and their parents' parents believe Canada was – and I try to convey that, to make the young people understand that this happened – it's not a fairy tale, it's true." (Mike s interview, 7 June 2016)

This final analysis chapter will discuss educational practices as spaces of sharing and negotiation of difficult histories, as reflected in the context of the educational activities of the Shingwauk Residential School Centre and the members of the CSAA. I will further elaborate the concerns expressed by my interviewees on insufficient public awareness about and engagement with the history of residential schools. Connecting the local context with the ongoing public discussion on history and legacy of residential schools, I will lay special focus on the aspect of transformation in regards to social memory. As shared memory of the past is regarded as essential to uniting communities and societies, equally diverging understandings of the past are associated with division and conflict in the present (Connerton 1989, 3). However, I am here more concerned with how remembering as social practice can provide means of negotiation between conflicting perspectives on the past and its meaning for the present. One such opening is introduced by Campbell (2014, 105) who, instead of associating memory exclusively with cohesion within a community, views remembering as relational, maintaining that shared memory may involve diverging perspectives. "Sharing memory" does not need to mean agreeing on the past, but it can still contribute to creating understanding and to reforming troubled relations (*ibid*. 108). Simon (2005) equally finds potential in memory in addressing tensed relations shaped by historical injustice. He states that remembering involves an aspect of learning that can contribute to transformation in the present if there is space for attentive listening to other's memories that may conflict with one's own (*ibid*. 3–4).

Addressing the IRS system as an element of colonization has been observed as potentially disturbing for Settler-Canadian perspective on the history of the country (e.g. Mackey 2013; Regan 2010). According to Regan (2013, 13), reconciliation in regards to the history of residential schools should happen as part of a broader decolonization process in which settler Canadians engage in reconstruction of their national history through recognition of the still remaining colonial structures and mindsets. This requires what she

calls *unsettling pedagogy,* aiming at critical examination of the settler position in the colonial relationship and accepting responsibility for addressing the impacts of residential schools and colonization in broader sense (*ibid*. 32). Typical to such national processes of redress, the challenge is how to invoke sensibility and sense of responsibility in people towards something they might not find personally concerning them in the first place. That is, how to evoke a sense of being connected to the same history through one's position in historically formed relations (e.g. Simon 2005, 94; Regan 2010, 33). An indigenous scholar and teachers' educator Susan Dion (2004, 60) suggests that histories told from indigenous perspective, disturbing the dominant narrative of a benevolent multicultural state by bringing out indigenous struggles under colonization, are "calling Canadians to attend a story they would rather forget". In learning about residential schools, non-indigenous Canadians are, then, asked to take part in remembering that may challenge the grounds of their identification through their membership in the society (Regan 2010, 50).

I will approach this aspect of problematic remembering first by exploring how different articulations of the detachment/relevance of the history of residential schools for the present are reflected in the educational practices of the Centre and the Alumni. This discussion connects with conflicting views on the relationship between past and present that are at play in such debates over meaning of colonial histories. I will then turn to how questions of responsibility for the legacy of the schools, as defined according to historically shaped relations, are brought up in the same context. The last two sections of this chapter will focus on encounters with difficult knowledge as a form of transformative remembering and the local context as an environment of remembering and learning that may, by situating the learning experience in a particular, imaginable context, decrease the gap between the history and the visitors' present experience.

6.1 "This didn't happen hundreds of years ago": why residential schools still matter

Mike explains that when he's talking about these issues to young (non-indigenous) people he doesn't mean to blame anyone; that "this is what happened" and it exists "as a part of our history", and that now it is important to address the contemporary issues this history has led to, and to look to the future. He mentions some examples of struggles of indigenous people today such as communities without clean water.
(On a talk given by Mike to a group of secondary school students visiting the Centre. Field notes, 8 June 2016)

In his talk given to a large school group quoted above, Mike was trying to give his young listeners an idea of why the history of residential schools is relevant to the present society

in which they live, and why they should regard it as relevant to themselves. These questions reflect the challenges that appear to characterize both the public discussion on residential schools and the local context of trying to encourage engagement with the history of the Shingwauk School within the University and in the local community: the tendency to treat residential schools exclusively as a matter of past with little relevance in the present. In this section I will focus on the role of educational practices in relation the different articulations of the dynamics of past and present within the public discussion on residential schools. Perceiving practices of education on residential schools as not only sites for telling about the past but also for negotiation of its meaningfulness for the present, I will here discuss educational practices as potential spaces for challenging such "demands for closure of the past**"** (Campbell 2014, 144).

Simon (2005, 33) discusses how the past is rendered meaningful for the present through the concept of historical memory, which he defines as following:

> —historical memory is an ensemble of educative acts, not simply aimed at establishing, affirming or correcting the 'record', but most importantly aimed as practices that enable a living memory – one that dialectically presses on the sense of one's future purpose and possibilities. The antithesis of a living memory is a frozen one; a form of remembrance in which past is nothing but a past.

For memory to be "living" instead of "frozen" is thus determined by its experienced meaning and influence for the present and the future. The importance of seeing residential schools not as a sorrowful phase left in the past but as still meaningful and influential for lived experience in the present was brought up by my interviewees, and has been recognized by the TRC as an essential precondition for reconciliation (TRC 2015a, 8). Along with such arguments comes the idea that in order to reshape the relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians and the government, residential schools as a significant element of colonial policies need to be integrated into public memory of the society (Simon 2013, 135; Campbell 2014, 136, TRC 2015a, 268). What has been recognized as an obstacle for public recognition of residential schools among other colonial institutions as meaningful to the present society is a distancing rhetoric that draws a closure between the past and the present (e.g. Dion 2004, 57; Campbell 2014, 144). According to Dion (2004, 57), such rhetoric marks denial of the past's "relevance to contemporary experience", denying any responsibility for it in the present (see also Simon 2013, 136). In her analysis on public criticism towards the TRC, Campbell (2014, 144) observes that such criticism tends to view focusing on the past as an obstacle for the

society to move forward. These demands for a closure on the case of residential schools, she further argues, can be traced back to the idea of "memory as a store house" in contrast to a conception of remembering as essentially reconstructive practice taking place from the standpoint of the present. The storehouse view, according to Campbell, makes a clear separation between past and present: "This imaginary of separation may be used to suggest that the past will not influence the present unless it is disturbed in memory, and that when this happens it will take our attention from the present and the future." This view, in turn, ignores the ways in which the past shapes the present (*ibid.* 145–6).

Here we come to another, related political and rhetorical factor of undermining the present significance of residential schools: detachment of the institution from broader context of colonial policies and structures (e.g. Simon 2013, 135; Regan 2010, 37). Bentley (2016, 84) discusses this kind of distancing rhetoric in the context of apologies for colonial atrocities performed by certain European states. He observes that these apologies, although recognizing a certain violent or unjust episode, tend to detach this episode from the wider context of colonization in order to secure the broader, dominant history narrative and the contemporary moral position of the state. Uusihakala (2017) pays attention to contradicting temporal aspects of such political apologies. She argues that while they affirm a continuity between the past actions and the present, they simultaneously work for "breaking this continuity and connection" by marking a beginning of a new era separate from the injustice committed in the past (*ibid.* 6). When talking about the general public awareness of and engagement with the history of residential schools, my interviewees mostly appeared to share the concern that far too many Canadians indeed see the whole residential school discussion as having already reached its closure through the apology and the formal compensation procedures.

Denying the enduring relevance of the history of residential schools for the present means not only understating the lived impacts of the system but also ignoring that history as a part of colonial power relations that still shape the present society and relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians (e.g. Regan 2010, 37; Campbell 2014, 148). In their final report the TRC (2015a, 135) urged the Canadian public and decision makers to pay attention on how the legacy of colonization is still reflected in different areas of the society, from inequalities in living standards and health to high numbers of indigenous

children in child care system[22] and indigenous inmates in prisons. In an interview Mike brought up the unawareness of the legacy of those power relations, pointing at structural inequalities in public institutions such as the justice system that still reflect the same ideas of "white privilege" that the residential schools were based on:

> We [indigenous peoples] spent some 140 years on social engineering that made us like what we're today – so it was the residential schools (…) So by saying 'get over it', what they're telling is us to forget what they've done because it questions that whole aspect, or brings to question that whole aspect of privilege – so by asking to get over it, they're just reinforcing their position in privilege.

As Mike put it, "forgetting" residential schools can be connected with reproducing colonial power relations (Simon 2005, 94). Julie McGonegal (2009) compares responses of the non-indigenous public to accounts of injustice committed towards indigenous people in two different context, residential schools in Canada and the government scheme of forced adoption of Aboriginal and half-aboriginal children in Australia. She observes that while in Australia the discussion around the so-called stolen generations had mainly stemmed from the public demanding the government to take action, in Canada the discussion around residential schools had stuck in the area of politics, remaining indifferent to daily lives of most non-indigenous Canadians (*ibid.* 67–68).

Although the public awareness of the enduring legacy of colonially shaped relations has since been promoted for example by the TRC, this indifference was articulated by many of my interviewees as still posing a great challenge for educating people about residential schools. It was associated with not only general ignorance about indigenous perspectives on Canadian history, but also with persisting racist and stereotyping attitudes towards indigenous peoples. While talking with Sandra about the reactions she gets when telling people about residential schools, she pointed that especially many non-indigenous people do not see the connection between the structural racism indigenous peoples still keep facing and the residential school system as a manifestation of the same ideology that the former is grounded on. She recalled having several times encountered young visitors repeating stereotypical views about indigenous people as "dependent on the system" and "getting everything for free", likely learnt from their parents. As suggested by Bentley

[22] In the 1960s while the residential school system was already near closure, indigenous children were being taken into child care system in growing numbers to be located in white settler families, in some cases even out of the country. This policy, today called the Sixties' Scoop, continued as late as until the 1980s. In their final report, the TRC observes that the legacy of the Sixties Scoop and the IRS system is still visible in the high rates of indigenous children in foster care (TRC 2015a, 138).

(2016, 67) and Regan (2010, 11), a challenge for deconstructing the colonial legacy in contemporary structures and relations of a society is the enduring influence of that colonial ideology. In addition to negative attitudes towards indigenous peoples, the latter is also manifested as the long-endured silence of indigenous perspectives in dominant history narratives, enforced by various means such as exclusion from school teaching (TRC 2015a, 235). Residential schools, for example, were not something that the relatively young staff members of the Centre would have learnt in the school. On the other hand, the educational practices do provide a valuable arena for addressing these challenges. Referring to the talk given by Mike quoted at the beginning of the section, Sandra emphasized the potential to change these kind of ways of thinking by hearing about the topic directly from a survivor:

> A key to it is getting those first-hand stories and getting those first-hand experiences, because it makes people that these people are still alive, it didn't happen a hundreds of years ago, it happened like 20 years ago, the last one closed 20 years ago – so I was still alive when the last one was open. I know somebody who went to that last school (…) and that's not that long ago so I mean, when people sit around and say, you know, 'it was a long time ago, get over it', I love having survivors there because they can be like 'no, I'm still here, I'm still alive, it wasn't that long ago'.

Regan (2010, 11) points that how people learn about a difficult history has a significant part in how they relate themselves to it. Regarding the relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, Simon argues that more transactional "memory spaces" are needed to negotiate the memory of their shared past and present: "---memory spaces in which stories of speaking and hearing, remembering and learning are exchanged, examined and contested" (*ibid.* 4, 101). Educational practices can be viewed as such social spaces for negotiating the memory, in that they bring the participants into contact with survivors and their stories and provide space for encounter of conflicting views and discussion. Moreover, non-indigenous participants are brought into contact with indigenous perspectives on the history of their country that they might not otherwise be exposed to. Krista brought up this aspect when she, being asked about her experiences of working on the educational programs of the Centre, described an earlier project designed to support teachers to talk with their students about residential schools:

> Particularly because most of the teachers are quite Euro-Canadians they might not feel comfortable about talking about that, and so we were trying to explain how they can approach that in a way that's respectful, and trying to connect those

> teachers with indigenous community members so that they are inviting them to the classrooms to talk to the students.

Such encounters can potentially enhance the non-indigenous participants' understanding of actually sharing the same history and present with indigenous peoples whose perspective on that history they are hearing about. Campbell (2014, 111), drawing from Johannes Fabian's (1983, 31) ideas of temporal conceptions as tools of power[23], argues that such recognition of sharing the present shaped by a shared past is inevitable to renewal of relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians. Encouraging the participants to think about the history of residential schools as part of a wider colonial history and relations that are still influential in the present, education on residential schools can contribute to "closing the gap" between the "pastness" of the event and the lived experience of the participants.

In this section, I have discussed educational practices as sites of negotiating the memory of residential schools. The challenge of the educators is not only to make people aware of the wide scope of colonial history and its enduring influences, but to make them recognize it as related to themselves. Recalling her experiences of talking to different kinds of publics about residential schools, Susie described that although some people are deeply impacted by what she is telling them, there are many especially among older generations who do not find it touching themselves: "It speaks to the public of Canada that there are all different kinds of people here, legislation can't make them do something and you can't change the heart." Discussing how testimonies of residential school survivors are being received by the general public, Simon (2013, 136) calls for active "learning *from*" what is being heard; not only changing the content of a historical narrative but also at using the renewed understanding to initiate a change in the present. As was articulated by Susie and other interviewees, a change is to be made in minds and attitudes in order to make deeper change in power relations shaped by colonization. In the next section I will focus more specifically on this aspect, turning into questions of defining responsibility through historically shaped relations.

[23] Fabian views temporal distancing as a means of producing otherness: for example, the European colonization was justified by the idea that different cultures and societies could be set on different stages on the same temporal continuum, "naturally" proceeding towards civilization. Moreover, denial of "common occupation of time" works for distancing living societies into objects of research (*ibid*. 17, 31).

6.2 "In reconciliation there are two sides": calling for responsibility

In this section I will look more closely on what such change in attitudes might mean, in terms of how the present significance of residential schools is being defined and negotiated in relation to historical subject positions and responsibilities. I will pay special attention to remembrance as moral practice (see Lambek 1996); how the responsibility to address the legacy of residential schools is articulated and negotiated. Lambek (1996, 239), like Campbell (2014), views memory an essential part of social relations and interactions: "a function of social relationship" that involves moral evaluation of the interactions within that relationship. He argues that remembering as well as forgetting involve setting moral claims about the significance of that past; to remember is to position oneself in relation to the past, and in relation to the people the past is shared with (*ibid*. 248). My interviewees appeared to a great extent to agree that because residential schools were a part of broader political structures working for colonization of the indigenous peoples and supporting the privilege of the settlers, addressing the legacy of the system is responsibility of all Canadians. I will now focus on how this matter of responsibility as reflected in the educational practices.

The staff members of the Centre, as well as the Alumni engaged in educational action, brought up that residential schools are not necessarily an easy topic to open a conversation about. This was not only the case with those having difficult experiences of the topic through personal or family connections to the schools. According to those interviewees, such as Krista, Sandra and Mike, learning about history of residential schools can be hard to accept for those who do not necessarily have a direct personal relationship to the topic, in a sense that it may conflict with their existing views on history. Dion (2004, 58) and Regan (2010, 11), for example, suggest that addressing the history and legacy of residential schools is difficult to non-indigenous Canadians as it brings out aspects of structural racism and injustice that are conflicting to the dominant narratives of the national history. This aspect was brought up in many interviews; it appears to be hard for some non-indigenous Canadians to accept that the state they are citizens of and that they have used to view as benevolent could have taken on such a harsh policy in its past (see Regan 2010, 11). In the context of stolen generations in Australia, Ahmed (2014, 36) observes that learning about that history can prove challenging to non-indigenous Australians as the recognition of themselves as part of the same history may shake their

identities. In order to reach similar recognition among Canadians, Sandra viewed the outreach work such as what is done by the Centre as very valuable:

> —we're kind of like that here in Canada, we hide the fact of what we've done, we signed the UN declaration after World War II about genocide but we were still perpetuating genocide ourselves, or I mean we were kind of in that denial, and I feel that the Centre's work's really important because a lot of Canadians are in denial that we've done anything wrong to anybody.

Regan (2010, 109) and Simon (2013, 136) argue that in order for reconciliation to proceed between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, the latter need to accept the responsibility that has been brought to them by being part of the unequal relations formed through the history of colonization. Simon (2005, 91) and Campbell (2014), among others, pose the question of how these kinds of difficult histories can be dealt with: how to make people adapt a sense of responsibility for past events one has not necessarily had personal control on.[24] According to Simon (2005, 91), this asks for developing a sense of being part of the relations in which the events have been taking place (see also Dion 2004, 60). In other words, for non-indigenous Canadians to engage actively with the history of residential schools would entail them to see how their position in the society has been shaped by the same history of colonization (Regan 2010, 109). In the talk that I referred to in the previous section, Mike talked to a group of mostly non-indigenous secondary school students a lot about privilege as something inherited through historical relations:

> Mike asks at first how much the students know about First Nations history in general – no clear answers, and he confirms that probably not that much. He talks about the beginnings of indigenous-white relations upon the arrival of the Europeans, gives some background for the issues over the land – how it was a new opportunity to most of the settlers ("to your European ancestors") to be able to possess land due to feudal systems and class hierarchies in Europe. (…) Moving back to residential schools, he tells about how parents could be put in jail if not sending their children off to the schools. He concludes that these are things that aren't talked so much about in the context of Canadian history – how the student's parents or grandparents probably haven't learnt about these things at school. He explains about how back at that time the whites gained themselves a privileged position based on race and that "now you are able to enjoy these privileges". (Field notes, 8 June 2016)

In this talk, Mike was explaining how these non-indigenous youth also have a position in the same history and same relations as residential school students and their families, as

[24] This problem is also prominent in the case of political apologies of contemporary governments for the deeds of their predecessors: whether the responsibility for those actions is located solely to past actors, or whether it can be extended to contemporary government and citizens (e.g. Bentley 2016, MacKay 2013).

that history has come to shape their own position in today's society. This is why, although not necessarily having a direct connection with residential schools, they are invited to share the same history, and thereby also responsibility for it. Calling for accepting responsibility related to a past that one has not personally experienced can be viewed as a type of moral claims and definition of subject positions in moral terms that remembering as social practice involves (Lambek 1996, 248). Setting claims on the history of residential schools as a part of broader history of colonization involves extending those claims on contemporary relationships between indigenous peoples and settlers.

Responsibility here is defined according to one's position within the historical power relations instead of according to one's own intentional actions. Thompson (2002, 13) views responsibility for state-initiated injustice as intergenerational, being passed down to next generations through the continuity of the state as a community binding its members to obligations that draw from the actions of their predecessors. Ricoeur (2004, 474) writes about "political guilt", referring to inherent responsibility for past injustice through membership in the "political body in the name of which the crimes were committed". He continues that this responsibility is independent of the actions of particular persons but is rather defined according to their position to benefit from the "public order" of the state that has committed injustice and that they are citizens of (*ibid*. 475). Having written about such collective responsibility especially in the context of the Holocaust, Hannah Arendt (e.g. 1994, 150-1) separates it from moral guilt in that guilt can only be attached to individual persons and their actions. However, through their belonging to a community, individuals can be held *responsible* for actions they have not committed personally (*ibid*. 149). Vanessa Sloan Morgan (2017, 7) brings Arendt's conceptions into the Canadian context. Similar to Ricoeur, she suggests that the responsibility for dispossession of indigenous peoples of their lands extends to today's settlers through the privileged position they have inherited as a result of colonization. This kind of responsibility, as illustrated within the case of residential schools, is not necessarily easy to accept. When I had an interview with Sandra only some days after Mike's talk, this same event came up:

> When you talk about privilege – it's a very popular thing to talk about these days – and a lot of settlers here in Canada take it as blame – they get very offended, they get very mad (…) and you're trying to explain to them that 'your ancestors came here because they wanted a fresh start, they wanted land, they wanted to escape persecution and they came to this place and they had significant

> advantages. (…) And for a lot of Canadians it's hard for them to recognize, but I feel like Mike explained it very well to them and I feel like that talk in the morning really helped with the students' reactions during the day.

As the latter illustrates, it may be challenging to make a distinction between personal guilt or blame and inherited responsibility. Dion (2004, 59) pays attention to "difficulty to listen" the stories for non-indigenous Canadians as they may challenge their way of thinking of themselves and their history: "hearing our stories disrupts their understanding of themselves and as such requires a process of 'learning from'". Here Dion draws a connection to Simon's idea of learning from the past as active engagement with that past and one's position in relation to it. Simon (2013, 136) notes that how the general Canadian public adopts or does not adopt a sense of responsibility concerning residential schools depends on the definition of responsibility in this context. According to him, responsibility is likely to be denied if it is associated with direct guilt of what happened. That is why it should be defined through todays' non-indigenous Canadians situating themselves in the same history with the indigenous peoples instead of "splitting the responsibility off" from contemporary relations by associating it with the past institutions and decision makers (*ibid*. 136). Campbell (2014) equally prefers to define responsibility in this context according to one's position within historically shaped relations. Instead of focusing on assigning blame or guilt, she calls for "forward-looking responsibility" that focuses more on the aspect of addressing ongoing injustice and dismantling the oppressive structures rather than appointing direct blame or guilt for past policies (*ibid*. 148, 151). This is also what Mike was focusing on when talking to the students about privilege. When I was having an interview with him later he described how he wants to make his listeners understand how the historical structures in the background of residential schools have worked in favour of the settlers: "That's what I do –trying to get them understand just a little – and that whole aspect, if you control – and you see, all those legislative instruments are set up to control privilege---" He also brought up the possibility that people may get offended or feel blamed, but also found a positive aspect in it:

> Oh yeah, yeah – some of them get offended by it – but I mean, if they're offended they must realize that there's something wrong, right? You know, and when you tell them that – you don't do it purposely, you don't offend them – that's the last thing in the world – you don't wanna stand up there and offend them – but also in that process of you telling them your story, if my story offends them then there's something wrong with how they react with (…) because if they're

> offended by what I'm telling them it's probably conflicting something that they believe – against their own belief system, right?

The listeners are invited not only to think about the past differently but to think about themselves and their relations to other people differently (see Campbell 2014, 148): especially non-indigenous listeners to reshape their understanding of their historical relationship to indigenous peoples. In this sense educating people about residential schools carries potential to encourage the wider Canadian public to accept responsibility to remember residential schools and to address their legacy – a responsibility that does not need to involve personal guilt. When asked in the interview that what, according to her experience, encourages people to get involved in addressing the history of residential schools, Susie noted that taking action for "righting the wrong" does not necessarily involve personal responsibility for that wrong:

> I think that the ones that are really genuine are the ones who've been touched in their hearts about this. And even though they might not feel morally responsible because they didn't do the – you know, the abuse and stuff like that, they didn't actually take the kids away – but I feel that they do wanna rectify the things that were done to us as children.

Jay continued about this, pointing that for some people being able to relate themselves to the story being heard increases their motivation to address the issue:

> I think there's a natural empathy with some people – they hear a story or they see a cause that they can relate to, in one way or another they can relate to, and they wanna be a part of it, they wanna – like she said, right the wrong in some fashion.

Positioning oneself within the same history is an act of sharing which also relates to (re)producing social memory (see e.g. Campbell 2014, 204–5). Here I have tried to illustrate how questions of responsibility and subject positions related to the history of residential schools pose challenges and are addressed in the particular context of the educational practices of the Centre and the Alumni. In addition to the different subjects being able to position themselves within the same history that has shaped their present, there is a need for social spaces in which this history, and the responsibilities and subject positions related to it, can be negotiated (see Simon 2005, 101). In the section I will turn into shared moments of encounter with difficult knowledge as spaces of evoking, in Simon's words, a transformative potential of remembering.

6.3 Troubling questions, remembering and learning

"I feel it like, with the outreach that the Centre does with the Sault Ste. Marie community – and Krista does a lot of outreach across Canada – I feel that it's very beneficial, to Canadians to kind of learn that maybe everything they have heard isn't true, and that kind of maybe opens up that conversation where there wasn't any conversation before. " (Sandra's interview, 10 June 2016)

In this section, I will explore the potential of disturbing questions discussed in the previous sections and the reactions they evoke for transformative remembering, and of educational sessions as social spaces in which these potentially unsettling moments of learning take place. Following Simon's ideas about pedagogical aspect of remembering, I will focus especially on the encounters with troubling knowledge that educational practices such as the ones organized at the Centre engage their participants with. Julie McGonegal (2009), referring to her own teaching experience, observes the pedagogical potential of discussions about residential schools as moments of "secret sharing" in which the otherwise unspoken knowledge about the history of injustice is spoken aloud. She argues that the "strong emotional as well as intellectual responses" that these moments evoke work for opening up a dialogue about the ongoing legacy of colonization (*ibid*. 79). Asking difficult questions that may conflict with one's previous understandings may then encourage to remembering the past and thereby understanding the present differently. I argue that the educational practices of the Centre, by bringing their participants into encounter with unsettling perspectives on the colonial history of their country, provide with a social space for such "moments of revelation" (McGonegal 2008, 79) that can open up dialogue potentially extending beyond the actual moments of the educational sessions.

When I interviewed the staff members of the Centre and some of the Alumni about their experiences as educators, I also asked about the reactions of their listeners who might possibly be hearing about residential schools in detail for the first time. All of them described an endless variety of possible responses. Krista paid attention to the impact of the learner's background in their reacting to the information:

> It depends on person and what their past experiences have been, sometimes there's anger associated with it, or disbelief, that they don't believe this could have happened. There's sometimes sadness because it was very traumatic, particularly if it was connected to them in some way. They can get a whole range of emotions, and sometimes they're fairly subdued in asking questions because they really want to learn more about why this happened and how it happened, and why they never learnt about it previously—

I would like to focus here on how the listeners' responses to being exposed to the history of residential schools in an educational context communicates with their relation on the topic and previous understandings about it. In the interview with Sandra brought up that far too many visitors, especially of non-indigenous background, do not seem to be moved too much by what they see and hear. However, she also brought up that some visitors experience very powerfully the information they learn, especially if they hear it from a survivor. She took up Mike's presentation to a school group a few days earlier, referring to the emotional reactions of some students in the public:

> —the other day when we had that large school group, you know, saw two students like break down in tears which was really crazy to see that kind of reaction and it's like "wow, we're actually getting through to some people" which is pretty amazing because I feel like a lot of times it's hard to get through to kids to make that real change but I think that those kids are gonna take away a lot of that experience.

Of course, hearing of the traumatic events of oppression and abuse may be shocking to listeners. However, it is not the so-called immediate reaction that is of primary interest here but the change that it is interpreted as a possible sign of. The example above illustrates a wish that an emotional reaction to hearing about historical injustice might indicate an emerging change in how the listeners view the significance of that history to themselves. As for the concept of emotional reaction, a recent trend in the social sciences scholarship on affect and emotion tends to separate *affect* as "pre-personal and non-intentional" immediate reaction, and *emotion* as stemming from a conscious subject towards an object (Thompson & Hoggett 2012, 3; Clough 2008, 2). I would rather follow a different line of argument here, articulated by Ahmed (2014) who questions the immediacy of affect. In order to challenge such dichotomy, Ahmed suggest the concept of *impression* that she views as essentially mediated, shaped by previous experiences and knowledge. Moreover, she argues as that this previous knowledge is partly socially and culturally formed, impressions draw from a "history of previous encounters" that goes beyond the subject (*ibid*. 8, 212). This would mean that encounters with the history of residential schools happen in the interplay of the situational context of the encounter and the subject's existing experiences and understandings that draw from wider socially shared frameworks (see also Keightley & Pickering 2012, 106).

Drawing a connection to memory, the question is how such encounters with disturbing history can contribute to transforming views about the meaning of that past for the

present. Theorizing experience in the context of remembering, Keightley & Pickering (2012, 30) separate between mundane, habitual experience and more outstanding or disruptive one that can, for example, conflict with previously held understandings or values. According to them, it is the previous type of experiences that due to their distinctive character become integrated in one's conscious memory. Referring back to the questions of historically shaped relations and responsibility for past injustice, shocked or rejecting responses might implicate emerging change in the participants' understandings about the past and its meaning for the present. Ahmed (2014) argues that when it comes to addressing a history of injustice, emotions generally regarded as negative, such as anger and sadness, can actually turn out "enabling and creative" in encouraging deeper engagement with that history. However, if overcoming negative feelings evoked by the injustice becomes too much of a focus within a public process of redress, the process may turn against itself into "erasing the signs of injustice" (*ibid.* 201).[25]

However, I was told that in addition to sadness or shock, strong reactions of participants to the historical details or survivor testimonies that they hear are often also related to disbelief or even denial. Quoted in the previous section, Sandra observed that visitors of settler background might feel blamed and "get mad" when encouraged to recognize their privileged position in the society as having been shaped by the history of colonialism. Referring especially to survivor testimonies in the context of the TRC, Simon (2013, 131) warns that emotional responses to such testimonies in themselves do not guarantee engagement in critical reflection on the wider historical context. Instead, they may result in victimizing survivors and thereby in reproducing colonial power relations. Regan (2010, 11) adds that, if not integrated into a wider project of decolonization, such responses may also end up as "backlashes of settler-denial". Simon (2005, 10), discussing how to make a personally meaningful connection with the past, argues that to become "touched by the past" requires "recognition of an encounter with difficult knowledge"; to be exposed to other's memories that may challenge one's existing perspectives. Being faced with disturbing information alone is then not enough, but the most important is to recognize that it conflicts with something in one's earlier ways of thinking.

[25] Ahmed poses these arguments in the context of Australia and *Bringing Them Home*-report of the national inquiry into the policy of forced adoption of Aboriginal children. She suggests that, by focusing on overcoming the "national shame" for the actions of the past governments, the report risks falling into "appropriating the pain" of the actual victims, and into bypassing the responsibility of the contemporary government and non-indigenous Australians for addressing the injustice (Ahmed 2014, 34–35).

Mike observed that the way some of his listeners get offended when he talks about residential schools in the context of privilege and structural racism signals that the story has had an impact on them and their ways of thinking. Even though these listeners might at first not find the history being related to themselves, the fact that they find it disturbing suggests something else. Such reaction might rather indicate recognizing that this history has shaped the present circumstances in the society and one's own position in it. Reflecting on Mike's talk, what is ideally recognized here is that the contemporary position of Euro-Canadians in their society has been influenced by historical injustice towards others. Referring to the stolen generations' testimonies in Australia, Ahmed (2014, 200) argues that recognition of "the injustices of colonization as a history of the present" entails a reformed understanding "of the ground on which we live" as shaped by those injustices. However, Simon (2005, 101) and Regan (2010, 51), among others, suggest that in order to enable such moments of recognition there is a need for social spaces in which they are made possible through dialogical encounters.

The aspects of interaction and dialogue in remembering become important here when perceiving these educational sessions as spaces for transformative remembering. The persisting impact of colonial ideologies in attitudes towards the history and towards the indigenous peoples today can be brought into light in discussions that presentations and tours evoke, which also creates space for challenging them. Sandra mentioned in the interview that she encounters racist attitudes and misconceptions of history in her work at times, but found that these encounters can actually be fruitful in opening up dialogue and challenging the existing perspectives of the participants:

> I've gotten some negative reactions before, the kids being, I guess, repeating what their parents say to them, kind of "well natives get everything for free now so it should be fine" and it's like, "well that's not true", and, you know, even though sometimes we get bad reactions I think it's a good thing to get bad reactions because then you can kind of clear up some of the misinformation.

She also noted that she sees a potential of children learning and "taking home" what they have heard even though their immediate reactions to it would be skeptical or negative:

> Even when I get bad reactions, when kids are acting up and they're running around and they're not paying attention – you know, it still matters that they're here, it still matters what we're telling them cause they're still gonna remember it and they're still going to take it away – and it might make a difference in a couple of years when they realize the gravity of the situation, they realize what this means for them.

The realization of the significance of what has been heard does not necessarily come immediately, but the listeners may still not forget it. According to Keightley and Pickering (2012, 29) the meaning of an experience is in a continuous process of reforming as it is being reflected on person's existing experiences and knowledge and on shared social and cultural frameworks. It is through time that an idea of an experience as meaningful and transforming develops (*ibid.* 26). Moreover, how these experiences are rendered meaningful takes place in communication and negotiation with other people. Another important aspect the interviewees brought up is that children may likely communicate further to their families what they have learnt. This way, they will contribute to expanding the dialogue that is needed for "unsettling" the dominant settler perspectives on history. This is what I view as a practical example supporting Campbell's (2014, 108) argument that sharing memory as social practice can mean negotiation between conflicting perspectives: negotiation of the past in a way that may shake former identities based on certain understanding of history, and thereby creating basis for reforming those identities and relations. Finally, I will now move on to discuss personalized and localized histories of my research context as a setting for the encounters with such unsettling knowledge.

6.4 "We need to humanize the experience": intimate encounters with the past

In addition to uncomfortable reactions of shock or rejection, many of my interviewees pointed to a challenge to overcome the indifference they are often faced with when talking to public about residential schools. Sandra observed that in the educational context of the Centre, this was often case when talking about general facts such as the living conditions of the schools: "A lot of people don't seem like they really care --- they kind of don't think it was that bad – I don't think they just grasp the situation that much." In this final section I will approach the tensions between the general and the particular in terms of how people are invited to take part in active remembering of residential schools: how to prevent the topic from turning into a distant and generalized history, separate from the their experience. Simon (2013) observes that public discussion relying on standardized representations risks the public losing their interest on accounts of residential school experiences and survivor testimonies losing the power of their particularity. He argues that instead of falling to generalization of all survivor testimonies into a standardized narrative of victimhood, meaningful learning from them requires understanding "how the subjection to residential schooling was lived differently by different people while coming to terms with how the logic of forced assimilation operated in specific circumstances"

(*ibid*. 132). I would like to end this chapter by discussing the value of the local context and personal stories of survivors in showing the history in a particularized setting. Focusing on the aspect of imagination and experience in witnessing other's memories, I argue that such contact with a particular local memory enables integration of the memory of residential schools into visitors' own experience. The latter, in turn, might prove vital in encouraging active remembering and examination of residential schools as a part of the shared history of the country.

When explaining how the Centre tries to encourage engagement with the history of the place among the students of the University, Krista told that they try to "integrate the history into every student's experience". What is ideally at stake here, I suggest, would be an encounter with the past that is more intimate than reading from a history book. As to how such intimate encounters practically take place**,** I would like to pay some attention to the role of imagination in instances of being invited to attend the memory of a past one has not experienced first-hand. Bloch (1998, 121), in his analysis on transmitting memory through the original sites of past events, suggests that such transmission occurs precisely through being able to connect with the past on the level of experience. According to him, the latter is made possible by combination of the surrounding environment, verbal recollection and imagination. Keightley and Pickering (2012, 2) argue that imagination is crucial yet underrated[26] dimension of remembering. As there is no access to the past "as it happened" but only through reconstruction from the present, imagination is what makes this reconstruction possible. Keightley and Pickering introduce the concept of *mnemonic imagination* that enables making past meaningful for the present and connecting one's personal experience with large-scale social and historical phenomena and mediated experiences of others (*ibid*. 7). Here I wish to shed some light on different elements at play in the local context that support imagination and thereby reconstruction of an understanding of the past. I argue that learning about the history of residential schools in the local setting gives a human face and a location to the past that may otherwise appear distant to the visitors. Such contextualization can further work for supporting people's ability to relate themselves to that history on a larger scale.

[26] According to Keightley and Pickering (2012, 2), imagination is a largely disregarded concept in the field of memory studies. Ricoeur (2004, 21), for example, separates imagination from memory in that the latter involves an aspiration for truthfulness that the former does not. However, Keightley and Pickering (2012, 3, 63) challenge this separation or even juxtaposition and argue that imagination should rather be viewed as a vital component of memory, enabling reconstruction of coherent understandings of the past.

What makes the educational context of the Centre specific in regards to supporting imagination is the environment; the history is heard about in a place where it actually happened. On the guided tours, the place itself is employed as a resource for supporting the visitors' ability to imagine life in a residential school. Combining information on what the different spaces used to be for with retellings of survivor's recollections, visitors are given a chance to imagine certain events in the surrounding space:

> We are standing outside the main entrance of the school. Krista tells about the architecture: the same architect worked for the government and designed this typical type of a building for residential schools. "Just imagine yourself coming here as a child—" She goes on to explain that a building such as this one must have been scary and different from any buildings the children [coming to residential school for the first time] had seen before, and how the part of the design was that the building was supposed to look institutional. Someone says it looks a bit like a jail – Krista comments that the same architect who designed residential schools actually also designed jails. (Field notes, 14 July 2016)

Here historical facts and experienced impressions heard from survivors are combined to enrich the visitors' impression of a particular space**.** Reflecting on an idea of certain kind of buildings as 'institutional' that the visitors' are expected to share, the staff of the Centre encourage them to put themselves into a position of a child encountering such a building for the first time. What one can also observe at work here is the affirmative value of place in affirming continuity between past and present (see e.g. Climo & Cattell 2002, 21). The temporal distance between the past and the experience of the visitor is to some extent collapsed by the recognition that something happened right here where we are standing at (Bloch 1998, 121). In the Australian context, Batten (2008, 94) points at particularity of local history as the basis of its "credibility and emotional power" in his analysis on a memorial of a violent attack towards local aboriginal people at Myall Creek. As with this old residential school, the memorial in Batten's research context invites to commemorate the lives of particular people, while simultaneously referring to a broader history of colonial violence (*ibid*. 86).

Personal encounters with residential school survivors were another important factor the staff of the Centre considered to have an impact on visitors. According to Simon and Eppert (2005, 51), the pedagogical potential of testimony in relation to historical documentation lies in its capacity to "make the history alive" by representing it in a personalized context. I would add that a personalized account may support the listener's ability to relate to it by reflecting on their own lived experience. The survivors themselves

shared similar experiences. Susie observed that although some people respond to her talks with polite indifference, a first-hand account tends to have more impact than generalized information: “It’s good to hear you speak first-hand of it, it’s different than reading it in a book, and the children of course are interested, I always say they ask hard questions like ‘did you miss your mom, why did your mom let them take you away---“ Referring to the affect discussion introduced in the previous section, I wish to pay attention to the interplay between the situational context of the learning experience and the background of personal experience and socially shared understandings against which it is reflected on (Ahmed 2014, 7; Keightley & Pickering 2012, 106). This is illustrated by how several interviewees found children as often more engaged listeners than grown-ups. They regarded children to be not only more open to new perspectives, but also in better position to identify with residential school experience while being close to the same age as the children who attended the schools. Mike described how the children share a similar life world and are thereby able to pay attention to things that are more distant to adults. He also told that he tries intentionally to highlight these elements in his story when he talks to children, in order to make it better understandable and relatable to them:

> Well, the younger children seem to grasp it a lot easier than the older people. You know, they can go back and relate better – say… you were only able to see your sister, not talk to her for a year, never having your birthday – all these simple, simple things children can relate to that adults couldn’t… but children, the younger ones, they can relate because they can put themselves in that position of that happening.

In an encounter with a personal testimony of a residential school experience, the past turns from distant history into a human experience the listeners can potentially find elements to connect with their own. According to Keightley and Pickering (2012, 106), it is with the help of imagination that one can make sense of others’ memories by setting them in relation to one’s own experience and larger socio-cultural frameworks. In the local context, direct references to that past from survivor testimonies to photographs and spaces on the school site support this aspect of imagination. Following Bloch’s (1998, 121) ideas of lived experience of learning about the past as vital to integrating it into one’s own memory, I would argue that this works for decreasing the distance between the history of residential schools and the lived realities of the visitors.

As for myself, I can still remember the insecurity about the choice of this thesis topic precisely for the reason of whether I would be able to appropriately deal with a topic that

is so distant from my own experience as a representative of the white mainstream population of my own home country. When, a few weeks after my arrival in Sault Ste. Marie, I met Mike for the first time at his office to talk about my research and to hear about his experiences as a former residential school student and survivor, I also got some advice from him on how to approach the topic as an "outsider". Mike advised me to try to imagine myself in that situation, being taken away from my parents as a child and put in a completely new environment in which I would not understand the language and would not be allowed to speak my own. It is this kind of small points of potential identification that appeared to be at work also in the educational context of the Centre, in order to make the history more comprehensible for the participants. Imagination here is to be understood not as fictionalization of the past but as a supplement for remembering that helps to form a coherent and relatable understanding of a past not experienced first-hand (Keightley & Pickering 2012, 57–58). Operations of colonial policies are made comprehensible by their manifestation in particular life experiences (Simon 2013, 132).

Imaginative aspect of memory is related to the ability to connect personal experiences with larger social or historical phenomena (Keightley & Pickering 2012, 2). When I had an interview with Sandra, she highlighted the importance of mediating a holistic impression of residential school experience especially to young non-indigenous people who are aware about the history but still do not appear to find it worth of a deeper thought. She reflected on her own experience of how contact with the material relating to original experiences of residential schooling, from pictures and letters to survivor's stories, has helped her to form a more coherent and realistic picture of what happened in the schools. This kind of encounter with the past as mediated in an interplay of different localizing and personalizing elements was what Sandra found essential for grasping a more living impression of the past:

> I feel like that's the key – because you need to humanize that experience – you can look at facts, you can look at timelines and be like yea, that was really horrible and then go home at the end of the night and not give it a second thought but then when you have these people coming in and they talk to you and they tell their stories and you have these first-hand photos and you have first-hand letters and it makes them, really makes them human, all of a sudden it's like wow, I can't believe that we did this.

Being able to find a past injustice experienced by somebody else meaningful for the present relates here to the ability to somehow connect with that past on the level of

experience. According to Keightley and Pickering (2012, 178), such imaginative aspect of memory is essential for transformative remembering, as ability to attend in others' memories with the help of imagination is "a pre-condition for empathy". That, in turn, is what "ethical social action" towards addressing the legacy of past injustice presupposes (*ibid*. 192). Relating to a history of injustice through imaginatively reconstructing others' experience should not result in identification with those others to the extent of "appropriating their pain" (Ahmed 2014, 35; Campbell 2014, 120). Rather, the ideal response would be critical reflection of the relationship between that past and the present conditions. I would suggest that bringing people into intimate encounters with particular local manifestations of a history of injustice could be understood as a form of testimony. What it involves is a call for witnessing that, as defined by Simon and Eppert (2005, 53) involves not only recognition of injustice happened but commitment in addressing what has been learnt. In this context, this would mean both reflecting on the legacy of the history of colonization on larger scale and one's own position in it in relation to other people (Campbell 2014, 148), and commitment to keeping up the local memory that has been passed on. The participants are invited to share the memory of residential schools to which they are connected to both via sharing the same history and as witnesses of this particular local memory.

How such experiences that combine elements of remembering and learning contribute to the more wide-scale changes in public atmosphere towards the memory of residential schools, I have shown, relates to a conception of remembering as communicative practice happening in social interactions. Encounters that involve other people, conflicting perspectives on history, places, object and testimonies enable experiences of learning become integrated into memories of participants. Ideally such encounters may initiate a change in their understanding of the past and thereby also of present circumstances of their society. Moreover, these experiences can expand the dialogue over a contested past further while participants "take home with them" what they have learnt. This reflects the transformative and negotiating aspect of social remembering that I have tried to open up in this whole chapter. The educational practices described here create spaces for challenging claims for closure of the past, and promote dialogue on questions of responsibility and the legacy of colonial relations in the present. In other words, they make space for remembering that entails understanding the present differently.

7. Conclusions

In the midst of the general insecurity about whether the memory of residential schools will fade due to remaining distant from lives of most non-indigenous Canadians, local practices of remembrance can play an important role in working against forgetting. Memory practices around the Shingwauk Residential School are an illustrative example of how these concerns that characterize the broader discussion on residential schools and reconciliation are addressed in a local context. As I have shown in my analysis, social transmission and negotiation of shared memory and significance of past events take place also somewhere else than in public discussion and government-initiated commemorative practices. In this particular context the history of residential schools is situated in a localized and personalized setting, in contrast to public discussion that for some may appear as distant and relying on standardized representations.

In chapter 4 I discussed how the Shingwauk Residential School has become such a focus of social practices of remembrance as it is today, simultaneously as the public and historical silence around residential schools has been dissolved. These local practices started at the time when the schools were still a largely silenced topic in official history narratives, and have thereby contributed to making space for the emerging public discussion and affirming residential school survivors' position as historical and political subjects. As this has happened through local and, since the first reunions, mostly survivor-driven action, the relationship between the public discussion and local practices of remembrance and activism has been two-directional. These actions have worked for challenging dominant narratives of Canadian history, in which there has until recently been little room for perspectives of indigenous peoples. The Shingwauk Project, the CSAA and the Centre have been engaged in the work of documentation and preservation of the history of Shingwauk as well as other residential schools since their early days. This way, they have very practically contributed to "filling in silences" in the history of the relations between indigenous peoples, settlers and the government.

Chief Shingwauk's vision of cross-cultural education as the founding narrative of this particular residential school appears to hold a key position in how people involved in the above memory practices render the history of the school meaningful for the present and the future**.** Instead of separating the contemporary state of the old school site as a

university completely from its time as a residential school, these two phases are set on the same, purposeful continuum proceeding towards fulfilling the vision. Such framing of this local history challenges the re-victimizing idea of indigenous peoples as passive objects of colonization, by highlighting the original purpose of the school initiative as a strategy of indigenous communities maintaining their self-determination. A history of oppression thereby becomes turned into that of self-determination and resistance. Involving claims on continuity between the past and the present, such reframing sets these objectives of promoting cross-cultural education and indigenous self-determination as the guidelines for the future of the site.

Rather than viewing memory as a static narrative, I have considered it as something produced and constantly gaining new meanings in social relations and interactions. I have reviewed the Centre and the Shingwauk Gatherings as special social spaces where acts of retelling and reconstructing the memory of the Shingwauk School take place, thereby ensuring continuity of remembering. The meaning of the past is also being constantly re-defined according to present circumstances. An illustrative example is the way in which the Shingwauk's vision of cross-cultural education has been updated into a guiding principle of the University today by extending the idea of "cross-cultural" to cover all cultural backgrounds instead of only indigenous peoples and settlers.

In chapter 5 I brought up the role of the site of the school as a place of memory in these social practices of defining the significance of the past. I have discussed the site as a place of remembrance for survivors, as material evidence of residential schools, and as a space of contestation and negotiation. In addition to commemorating a particular residential school, the site is a place in relation to which claims on the broader historical significance of residential schools are articulated. However, the site should not be viewed a mere location of practices of remembrance and a target of memory claims. Instead, it has a dynamic part in those practices: the memory shapes the place and vice versa. In my analysis on memory and place, I have considered both as emerging and being shaped in social relations and interactions. I have argued that the past of the Shingwauk site keeps having its impact on the contemporary relations among different actors involved with it today. This is, of course, not something self-evident but dependent on how the significance of that past is defined and negotiated among those actors. The way the history of the school is taken into account in the operations of the University, and claims of the

Alumni and others on how that should happen, are practical contexts in which this negotiation takes place.

Challenging the perspective in memory studies that views material sites of memory as a means of externalizing the work of remembrance and detaching it from lived experience, I have argued that the place in this context is to a great extent involved in the work of remembrance. Instead of "memory work" being replaced from people to material sites and objects, in this context the responsibility to remember and to engage with the past is articulated precisely in relation to the place. For the Alumni and others to whom the history of the site matters, this responsibility binds all people involved with the site today with an obligation to take part in addressing the legacy of the school, and to work for "fulfilling Shingwauk's vision". The challenge is, according to my interviewees, how to make all the different parties from the University administration to students from different backgrounds to accept that responsibility. Instead a substitute for active remembering, this particular "place of memory" is deeply involved in social tensions over what should be remembered or forgotten.

Extending the discussion from the local context into general objectives and challenges of raising public awareness about the history of residential schools, in chapter 6 I discussed the educational practices of the Centre and the Alumni as social spaces for negotiation and transforming the public memory of residential schools. I perceived these objectives in relation to two widely recognized challenges: disagreement over the relevance of the history of residential schools for the present society, and skeptical attitudes of many non-indigenous Canadians as to why they should bear any responsibility for that history. I have approached these challenges from the perspective of transformative potential of social memory, drawing from the ideas of Sue Campbell (2014) on reforming relations through sharing memory, and Roger Simon (2005) on making space for encountering and situating oneself in relation to others' memories through communicative practices of remembering and learning. I have argued that local educational practices such as those of the Centre work for creating such spaces of encounter and negotiation. The participants are not just provided with a package of information about the history, but encouraged into reflecting what that history could or should matter to them.

These kinds of educational initiatives, I argue, function as an interface between official, public commemorations and everyday experience of people. Bringing the participants

into contact with survivors and their first-hand stories and with the original location of the past events, such practices bring past of the residential schools closer to their experience. They also provide space for discussion, questioning and challenging, and thereby support dialogue and negotiation over that history. In response to concerns over how to make the history of residential schools, in Campbell's (2014, 148) words, "to be alive to the memory of non-Aboriginal Canadians", educational practices of the Centre aim at supporting participants' ability to set themselves as a part of the same history and to reflect their relationship to it. Moreover, I have shown how localization and personalization of a history can make it more relatable to people. The educational practices can thus be regarded as a way of inviting their participants taking part in and responsibility for remembering residential schools, both on local and national level.

Taking the potential of educational practices as social spaces of remembrance to the discussion of memory and place, and to the concerns voiced especially by Shingwauk survivors as to how to "keep the memory of the place alive", the role of the Centre appears crucial in integrating the memory of Shingwauk School into everyday life of the site. If remembering is to be understood as practice consisting of acts of retelling and negotiation, the Centre provides with a central social space for both. As a space of encounter and connection for the Alumni and their descendants, it provides them with space for reproducing memory of the school and "keeping it alive" among themselves. By introducing students to the history of their campus and bringing them, as well as faculty members and administration of the university, into contact with survivors, the Centre creates space for negotiation the significance of the past of the place for the contemporary life of the University.

Through these examples, I have addressed remembering as social practice taking place in interactions between people, involving also places and physical objects, and not separate from public framings of history or relations of power (Irwin-Zarecka 1994; Connerton 1989). I have tried to avoid viewing social memory as automatically resulting from a shared experience, and instead to perceive it as emerging in social interactions: how people position themselves in relation to the past is also about how the situate themselves in relation to each other. Consequently, negotiating the significance of the past is inseparable from negotiating social relations in the present. Having adopted Lambek's (1996) concept of remembering as moral practice, not as a representation of but rather a claim on the past, I have tried here to view remembering as intertwined with setting claims

and defining responsibilities within present relations. This is illustrated in the local context of the Shingwauk site. The past of the place is viewed as determining certain responsibilities to the people and institutions inhabiting it today, as well as giving the survivors of the Shingwauk School a special entitlement in controlling what happens on the site. This is not separable from the wider questions concerning the significance of residential schools for the history and the present of the country. These local "memory claims" reflect the more broadly shared statements that due to the large-scale impacts of schools on indigenous communities, a responsibility still binds the contemporary society to address their legacy**.** In addition to institutions such as the federal government and the churches that operated the schools, this responsibility is extended to regular non-indigenous Canadians as they are all connected to the same history. In this local context, calls to remembering residential schools are articulated on several levels: in relation to the place and keeping the local memory alive, and for the wider Canadian public to take part in the process of reconciliation.

When addressing the history of residential schools is viewed as part of a larger process of reforming contemporary relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, the Shingwauk site again provides a local context in which these relations are constantly worked on. I have argued that the site is more than just a location where such relation forming takes place. The above claims concerning compensation and responsibility for the past, for example, shape the contemporary functions of the site in diverse ways. Representation of survivors and the local First Nations communities in the administration of the University and teaching of indigenous cultures and languages are examples of how the contemporary institutions on the site seek to address the legacy of its past as an instrument of colonization. A local context like this one could provide a fruitful ground for further investigation of how negotiation between differing perspectives on shared history takes place in everyday encounters. For example, an important question mostly left outside of the scope of this thesis is how the people studying and working on the site today – excluding the staff of the Centre – experience the significance of its history.

Drawing from previous discussion on initiatives of reconciliation in settler colonial states such as Canada and Australia, I have shown that these claims for responsibility are based on a particular understanding of the relationship between past and present. As has been stated by Regan (2010), and Bentley (2016), among others, the denial of the influence of colonial history and power relations in present societies relies on the distinction of the

past and the present into separate temporal entities where the present conditions and relations are not recognized as shaped by a particular kind of history. Releasing present actors from the responsibility for addressing the legacy of a historical injustice, such rhetoric entails a claim that the past should be left behind in order to move forward. In this thesis I have shown how these kinds of claims for "closing the past behind" are challenged in local practices. What is very specific to the local context of the old Shingwauk School is how strong claims on continuity between the past and the present of the old school site are articulated in order to establish a link between its history and its purpose for the present and future. As for the contesting claims around the site, separation of the past of the place as a residential school from its contemporary functions as a university is challenged on the basis of setting the two phases on the same historical continuum. The two are viewed as tightly attached to each other through bonds of responsibility. It is also through this idea of continuity that the control of different indigenous parties of interests on the site is being legitimated. As the original purpose of the site has been to secure indigenous self-determination and to promote cross-cultural understanding, that is what the place needs to continue to be committed to. These claims entail an understanding of the connection between past, present and future that enables viewing them not as distinct temporal entities, but as essentially interconnected.

As a response to the concerns over whether the public discussion on residential schools will remain short-lived, the old Shingwauk School provides an example of a social space in which the work of remembrance as relational and interactional practice is still ongoing. Although the present relevance of such engagement with the past is at times challenged, these local practices form as a significant counter force against forgetting as they keep the discussion going and bring together diverse or even conflicting perspectives. The same applies both for the negotiation over the significance of the local history of the Shingwauk School, and for the educational practices of the Centre that aim at raising awareness about the general history of residential schools. Both work for reducing the gap between the past and the present by making colonially shaped relations and structures of silencing visible, and inviting more people to take part in active remembering. Remembering in this context means critical reflection and negotiation on the significance of the past that is also to a great extent about setting expectations for future. On local as well as national scale, "to keep the memory alive" entails not only not forgetting the past but transforming the ground on which the future will be built.

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